MAXIMUMROCKNROLL

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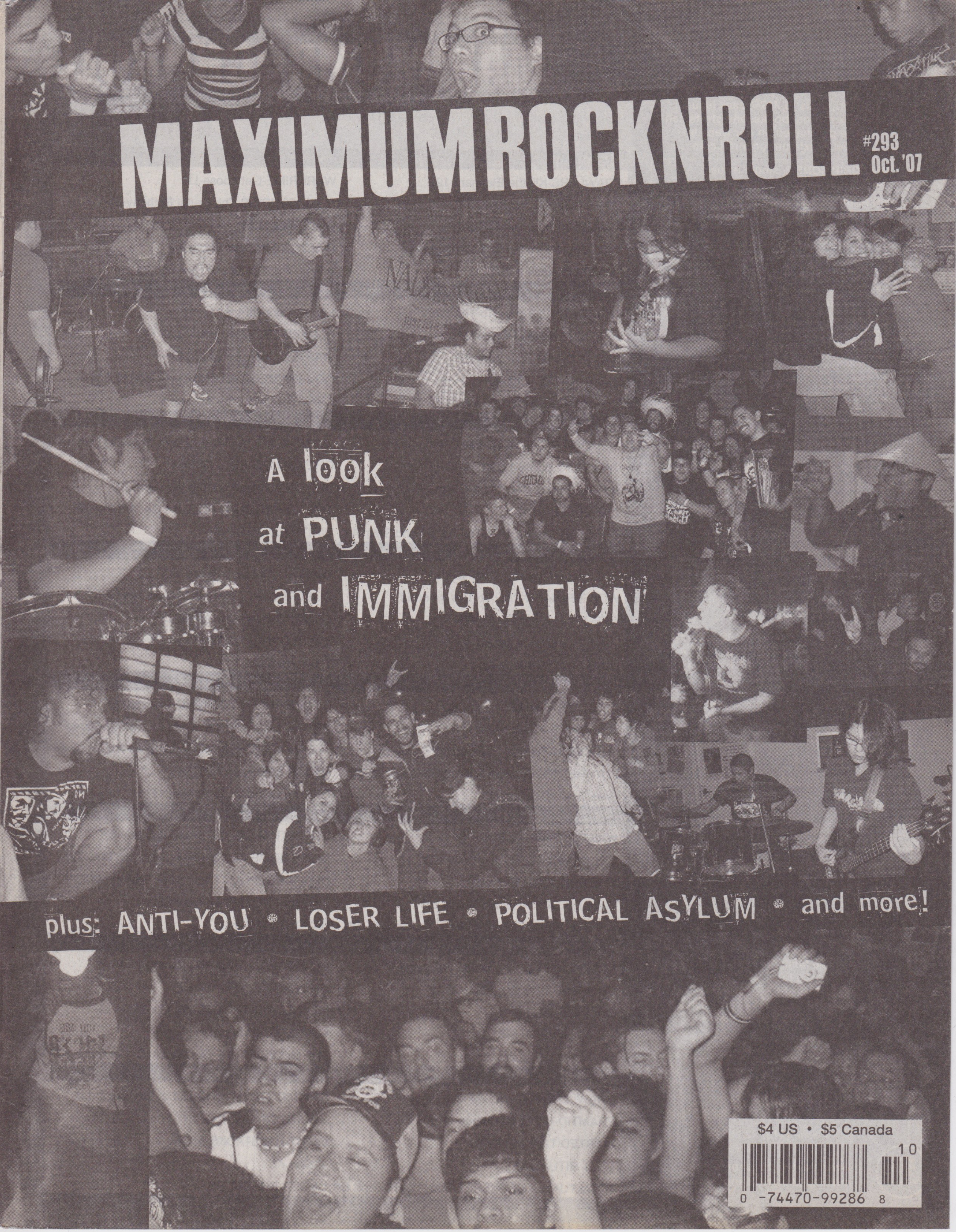

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MAXIMUMROCKNROLL

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BACK ISSUES AVAILABLE: #148, 150-151, 153-154, 156 pts. 1 & 2, 160-163, 166, 172, 174-175, 179-197, 199-181, 184-210, 214-215, 218-227, 229-292 **See page 4 for pricing and other info.**

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TOP 10

For what it's worth, here's some of the MRR reviewers' current Top 10 (or so) things we've reviewed this month.

JUSTIN BRIGGS

- CRAWLERS-Kill the Elephant-12"
- GOVERNMENT WARNING-Arrested-EP
- FRAMTID-Under the Ashes-LP
- PIOGGIA NERA-Teatri di Menzogne-LP
- FUNEROT-Nova II-LP
- WARKRIME-Get Loose-LP
- HOMOSTUPIDS-The Brutal Birthday-EP
- ORDER-Saru-EP
- WASTED TIME-No Shore-EP
- A.N.S.-The Process of Stoking Out-LP

TIM BROOKS

- WOLFBRIGADE-Prey To The World-LP
- LIFE TRAP-Bleak Reality-EP
- PRESS GANG-Your Way-EP
- GIANT HAYSTACKS-45
- THE MENTAL-Extended Play-LP
- LAMA -Tavastia-LP
- FUCKED UP/HARD SKIN-split EP
- WASTED TIME-No Shore-EP
- GOVERNMENT WARNING-Arrested-EP
- FRAMTID-Under the Ashes-LP

MITCH CARDWELL

- HOMOSTUPIDS-The Brutal Birthday-EP
- CATHOLIC BOYS-Dead Ball-EP
- BLANK DOGS-The Doorbell Fire-EP
- THE FEELERS-7"
- COCONUT COOLOUTS-The Spinaround/Swim-45
- THE MAKEOUT PARTY-2 Ez 2 Love U/Hedberg Boogie-45
- CHEVEAU/TYVEK-split EP
- SICK-E'S-Whispers From the Front-EP
- THE TRADITIONAL FOOLS-I Got A Baby-EP
- WHITE SAVAGE-live

ROB COONS

- FUCKED UP/HARD SKIN-split EP
- WOLFBRIGADE-Prey To The World-LP
- LIFE TRAP-Bleak Reality-EP
- WARKRIME-Get Loose-LP
- GIANT HAYSTACKS-45
- WASTED TIME-No Shore-EP
- GOVERNMENT WARNING-Arrested-EP
- FRAMTID-Under the Ashes-LP
- DAYGLO ABORTIONS-Death Race 2000-LP
- TRICLOPS-live

PAUL CURRAN

- BOSSY/DIRTY LOOKS-split EP
- THE ERGS-Blue/Blew-45
- FUCKED UP/HARD SKIN-split EP
- FUTURE VIRGINS-Part II: Words and Sounds-EP
- GIANT HAYSTACKS-45
- GOVERNMENT WARNING-Arrested-EP
- GRUPO SUB-1-Tercer Gradi En Leningrado-LP
- THE MEASURE [SA]/MODERN MACHINES-split EP
- NEVER ENDING PARTY-45
- OI POLLOI-Mind the Bollocks-EP

JONATHAN FLOYD

- WASTED TIME-No Shore-EP
- COBRA SKULLS-Sitting Army-CD
- THE ERGS-Blue/Blew-45
- FUCKED UP/HARD SKIN-split EP
- FUTURE VIRGINS-Part II: Words and Sounds-EP
- HOMOSTUPIDS-The Brutal Birthday-EP
- NOISE NOISE NOISE-Blazing Hot Title Track-CD
- DEREK LYN PLASTIC-Negative Feelings-EP
- SUBWAY SECT-1978 Now-CD
- BAYONETTES-live

LAYLA GIBBON

- HOMOSTUPIDS-The Brutal Birthday-EP
- CRAWLERS-Kill the Elephant-12"
- CULT RITUAL-EP
- GIANT HAYSTACKS-45
- LA PIOVRA-Disastro Sonoro-7"
- GOVERNMENT WARNING-Arrested-EP
- CHEVEAU/TYVEK-split EP
- YOUNG WASTENERS-We Got Ways-LP
- FUCKED UP-Year of the Pig-EP
- THE MODERETTES -Get Modern Or Get Fucked-LP

CHRIS HUBBARD

- CRAWLERS-Kill the Elephant-12"
- FRAMTID-Under the Ashes-LP
- WASTED TIME-EP & live
- CULT RITUAL-EP
- TOTALT JAVLA MORKER/HUMAN WASTE-split EP
- DAYGLO ABORTIONS-Out of the Womb-LP
- YOUNG CANADIANS-LP
- GIANT HAYSTACKS-45
- *Z-Gun #1*
- UNDER PRESSURE-live

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TOP 10

Please send two copies of vinyl or CD-only releases to the address on the previous page. See Demos section for where to send tapes & CD-Rs.

KENNY KAOS

- YOUNG CANADIANS-AKA The K-Tels-LP
- THE CLEAN-CUTS-Lollipop/I'm Gay-45
- GRANDE ROSES-Arctic Heart-EP
- MORTIMER-General Idi Amin Dada/Como Un Dia Mas-EP
- CATHOLIC BOYS-Dead Ball-EP
- THE GUTS/THE PROZACS-split EP
- THE MAKEOUT PARTY-45
- COCONUT COOLOUTS-The Spinaround/Swim-45
- DEREK LYN PLASTIC-Negative Feelings-EP
- STEVE E NIX & THE CUTE LEPERS-45

CAROLYN KEDDY

- COCONUT COOLOUTS-The Spinaround/Swim-45
- SICK-E'S-Whispers From the Front-EP
- GIANT HAYSTACKS-45
- THE TRASHIES-Life Sucks Trash Fuck-LP
- CATHOLIC BOYS-Dead Ball-EP
- CHEVEAU/TYVEK-split EP
- HOMOSTUPIDS-The Brutal Birthday-EP
- LAMPS-Lamps-LP
- FUCKED UP/HARD SKIN-split EP
- Un Chien Andalou-DVD / THE BAYONETTES-live

WILL KINSER

- LA BANDA TRAPERA DEL RIO-45
- INFEKCJA-Kazdy Robotnik-LP
- LAMA-LP / A.N.S.-LP
- GRUPO SUB-1-Tercer Gradi En Leningrado-LP
- PROJECT HOPELESS-Hit Men Inte Längre Utan Skyddshjälm-CD
- DAYGLO ABORTIONS-LP / WOLFBRIGADE-LP
- YOUNG WASTENERS-LP / ORDER-EP
- THE MENTAL-Extended Play-LP
- LA PIOVRA-7" / GOVERNMENT WARNING-EP
- SECOND OPINION-650-EP / POISON IDEA-live

RAY LUJAN

- BROADWAY CALLS-CD / SUBWAY SECT-CD
- THE CONDORS-Wait For It-CD
- PARTY WEIRDO-Chart Your Cycle-EP
- SICK SICK BIRDS-Chemical Trains-EP
- TERROR POP-Guerilla Warfare-EP
- ANGELWORM-Ruin Your Scene-CD
- NOISE NOISE NOISE-Blazing Hot Title Track-CD
- THIEVES AND ASSASSINS-Martyr Brigade-CD
- LEFTOVERS-CD / JENA BERLIN-CD
- HUNDREDS AND THOUSANDS-10"

ALLAN MCNAUGHTON

- FUCKED UP/HARD SKIN-split EP
- OI POLLOI-Mind The Bollocks-EP
- YOUNG WASTENERS-We Got Ways-LP
- NEVERENDING PARTY-Dog Eat Rat Fight/Vallejo-45
- THE MODERETTES -LP
- THE MENTAL-Extended Play-LP
- LÄRM-Campaign for Musical Destruction/Straight On View-LP
- YOUNG CANADIANS-AKA The K-Tels-LP
- SUBWAY SECT-CD / CHEVEAU/TYVEK-split EP
- LORDS OF LIGHT-Dividing Up-EP

BRUCE ROEHRS

- 86 MENTALITY-Goin' Nowhere Fast-CD
- LIFE TRAP-EP / WASTED TIME-EP
- FUCKED UP/HARD SKIN-split EP
- GOVERNMENT WARNING-Arrested-EP
- SIRENS-Sirens Calling-12"
- FUNERAL SHOCK-Some Kind of Bullshit-EP
- WOLFBRIGADE-LP / WARKRIME-LP
- RUINER-Prepare to Be Let Down-LP
- DESTROY L.A.-Vandalize-EP
- ANTiSEEN/HAMMERLOCK-live

MARTIN SORRONDEGUY

- GOVERNMENT WARNING-Arrested-EP
- WASTED TIME-No Shore-EP
- PANDEMONIUM-Who the Fuck Are You-EP
- SICK-E'S-Whispers From the Front-EP
- CULT RITUAL-EP
- LIFE TRAP-Bleak Reality-EP
- CRAWLERS-Kill the Elephant-12"
- HOMOSTUPIDS-The Brutal Birthday-EP
- A.N.S.-The Process of Stoking Out-LP
- PIOGGIA NERA-Teatri di Menzogne-LP

ZINE TOP TEN

- *Black Lesbian President #3*
- *Clench #9*
- *Fake Life #3*
- *If Death Comes #4*
- *Mix Tapers Do It Better #1*
- *Plastic Bomb #58*
- *Punk-Rocker #5*
- *Razorcake #39*
- *Slash and Burn #4*
- *Z-Gun #1*

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A WHOLE CRAPLOAD OF MRR BACK ISSUES...

#153/Feb '96. Snort, Hatchetface, Little Ugly Girls, ADZ, Oxymoron, NOTA, Stun Guns, Surfin' Turnips, Gutfiddle, Karen Monster, Dimestore Haloes.

#156 pt 1/May '96. Public Toys, Crunch, Peter & The Test Tube Babies, Nails Of Hawaiian, Splash 4, Yawp!, Lifetime, Sickoids.

#156 pt 2/May '96. Australian Special: Beanflipper, Melancholy, Blitz Babiez, Crank, SubRosa, Mindsnare, TMT, H-Block, B-Sides, Fallout, Frenzal Rhomb, Lawnsmell, One Inch Punch, Chickenshit, No Deal.

#161/Oct '96. Jet Bumpers, Steel Miners, Divisia, Lopo Drido, Red #9, Nothing Cool, Sink, Sires, Newtown Grunts.

#174/Nov '97. Stratford Mercenaries, Lickity Split, Bladder, Piss Shivers, Barnhills, In/Humanity. "Education" theme issue.

#175/Dec '97. One Man Army, Those Unknown, Boiling Man, Piao Chong, Exploding Crustaceans, Last Year's Youth, Heartdrops, Dirty Burds, Dimestore Haloes.

#179/April '98. Boy Sets Fire, Tres Kids, Idyls, Spat & The Guttersnipes, The Posers, Explosive Kate, Douche Flag.

#180/May '98. Reinforce, Discontent, TV Killers, Slack Action, Eyeliners, Mademoiselle, MK Ultraviolence, Haulin' Ass, 97a, Infiltrators, Jack Saints, Stray Bullets.

#181/June '98. Grapefruit, Druggies, DDI, Bonecrusher, Normals, All Bets Off, Stiletto Boys, Summerjack, Cell Block 5.

#184/Sept '98. Absentees, Devoid of Faith, UXA, Ümlaut, Four Letter Word, Streetwalkin' Cheetahs, Ricanstruction, Libertine, Indecision, Snarkout Boys.

#186/Nov '98. Registrators, August Spies, Marilyn's Vitamins, Chinese Love Beads.

#187/Dec '98. Real Kids, Sawn Off, Cretins, Spider Cunts, Heroines, 3rd Party, No Class.

#188/Jan '99. Stitches, Neighbors, Mansfields, Real Swinger, Marauders, Mark Bruback, Mars Moles, DOA.

#189/Feb '99. Monster X, Peter & the Test Tube Babies, Steam Pig, Maurauders, Yakuza, Dead Beat, Halfways, Hot Rod Honeys, DeRita Sisters.

#190/Mar '99. John Holstrom, Powerhouse, Brezhnev, Slappy, Black Pumpkin, Smartbomb ça, Wanda Chrome, Long Gones, Smogtown, Halfways, Tilt.

#191/April '99. Murder Suicide Pact, Kil Kare, Dudman, Super Hi-Fives, Better Than Elvis DJs, Pet Peeves, Loose Ends, Slingshot Episode.

#192/May '99. Los Crudos, Burning Kitchen, Henry Fiat's Open Sore, Polythene, Kangaroo Recs.

#193/June '99. Munster Recs, DS-13, Safety Pins, Pussycats, Piolines, False Alarm, Darlington, Bad Stain, Bodies, Houseboy, Mullets.

#194/July '99. Deathreat, Last Match, God Hates Computers, Fokkewolf, Flesh Eating Creeps, Aside, Hoppin' Mad, Kid Dynamite, Thee Outcasts.

#195/Aug '99. Moral Crux, RC5, Have Nots, Ill Tempered, Dysentery, Greg Higgins, Revlons, Larry & the Gonowheres.

#196/Sept '99. Hopscotch, Catharsis, Orchid, The Pricks, Grissle, Product X, Reaching Forward, Emerge, Third Degree, "Epicenter Zone '90-'99".

#197/Oct '99. Reducers SF, Lower Class Brats, Reactor 7, TheGodsHateKansas, Futuro Incierto, Showcase Showdown, Waifle, Flat Earth Recs.

#199/Dec '99. Locust, Ratos de Porao, USV, Razlog Za, G-3, Swarm, WHN?, Mt. St. Helens, Black Cat Music, Enemy Soil.

#200/Jan '00. American Steel, Curse, Gee Vaucher, Hers Never Existed, Aaron Cometbus, Active distro, Toxic Narcotic, MRR catalogue #100-200.

#201/Feb '00. Beerzone, Towards An End, Daybreak, "Best Punk Singles of the '90s," the WTO riots in Seattle.

#202/March '00. KTMWQ, Real Estate Fraud, Strike Out, Broken Rekids, the Haggard, GC5, Gore Gore Girls, the Catheters.

#204/May '00. Cocksparrer, Talk Is Poison, Red Scare, Put Downs, Out Cold, Geraldine, Michael Knight, CBGaV, Pillage People.

#206/July '00. Drunk, ESL, Ambition Mission, Lord High Fixers, Cripple Bastards, Dig Dug, Federation X, Amulet, Valentine Killers.

#207/Aug '00. Harum Scarum, Raw Power, Unseen, Pekinska Patka, Hudson Falcons, Dementia 13, Confine, Allergic to Whores.

#208/Sept '00. Le Shok, the Commies, the Chemo Kids, Day of Mourning, Affront, Diaspora, Whippersnapper, Hopeless/Sub City, Prank, Countdown to Oblivion

#209/Oct '00. Loose Lips, Godstomper, Peace of Mind, FYP, I Farm, Annalise, Cattle Decapitation, Riot/Clone.

#210/Nov '00. J Church, Profane Existence, Pezz, Pre-Teens, Templars, This Machine Kills, Subtonix, OB.

#214/Mar '01. Crispus Attucks, Fetish, Lifes Halt, Mr. Roboto, Dream Dates, Satan McNugget, Havoc, Briefs.

#215/April '01. No Means No, Vitamin X, Injections, Y, Dils, Last In Line, Don Austin, Deranged Records

#218/July '01. Guyana Punchline, Les Sexareenos, The Devil Is Electric, Red Monkey, White Collar Crime, Forca Macabra, The Ataris, Suicide, The Mob

#221/Oct '01. The G8 Summit, Reflections, Soophie Nun Squad, Totalitär, True North, Wontons, Sin Dios, Bottles & Skulls, Scarred For Life, Flowers in the Dustbin, Remains of the Day, Ritchie Whites, B'67.

#222/Nov '01. Dios Hastio, Tragedy, Four Letter Word, *Salad Days* author Charles Romalotti, Very Metal, Maurice's Little Bastards, the Rotters, MDC Brazilian tour diary, the Cravats, JR Ewing, Dutch scene, extended news section, "Globalization Rhetoric & Reality,"

#223/Dec '01. "US Policy in the Middle East," "Revisiting 1948," Manifesto Jukebox, Good Riddance, Pokers, Viimenen Kolonna, Bluebloods, Vitamin X tour diary, Flakes, Pg. 99, the Mob, 7 Days of Samsara.

#224/Jan '02. "Legislation Since Sept. 11, Rendencion 9.11, Metro Youth, Severed Head of State, Piranhas, Paraf, Backstabbers, Inc, An Albatross, Citizen Fish Tour, SPAM Records, the Virus, Action Time.

#225/Feb '02. Lengua Armada, Breaker Breaker, 3 Yrs. Down, Scrotum Grinder, Turun Tauti, Flux Of Pink Indians, Holding On, Pauki, 86'd, See You In Hell, Red Light Sting, Nazis From Mars, Scare Tactic.

#227/Apr '02. Bellrays, Rhinos, Wasted, Kristofer Pasanen, Business, Assert, DS 13 tour report, Life Set Struggle, Iowaska, Zounds.

#229/June '02. Countdown To Putsch, The Awakening, Dave Hill Distribution, Holier Than Thou, Kill Devil Hills, Sound Of Failure, E.T.A., Nubs, Les Baton Rouge, New Disorder Records, Career Suicide, Swellbellys, The Sinyx.

#230/July '02. Bitchin', Redencion 911, Phantom Limbs, Secretions, Holy Molar, Sharp Knife, Mighty John Waynes, A Global Threat, Groovie Ghoulies, Reproach, Annie Anxiety.

#231/Aug '02. Epoxies, Puppy Vs. Dyslexia, Koro, Blocko, Amdi Petersen's Armé, Piss & Vinegar Zine, Schizophrenic Records, Toys That Kill, Give Us Barabbas, Dirt.

#232/Sept '02. "No Future" article, Lost, Fartz, Sell Outs, Razors Edge, Stakeout, Dillinger Four, All or Nothing HC, Fleshies, Bridge Nine Records, Akashic Books, Liberty.

#233/Oct '02. "All Ages" article, Scholastic Deth, Runnamucks, Sinners & Saints, Panic, Gasolheads, Jewws, Futures, Michael Landon's Commandos, Storm the Tower, Against Me!, Balance of Terror, Class Assassins, Spazm 151.

#234/Nov '02. Snobs, What Happens Next? Brazilian tour, The Oath, Radio 4, Feederz, Charm City Suicides, Selfish, Riot 99, End On End, Peawees, Born/Dead.

#235/Dec '02. Anti-war Special Issue. Articles: "Reading for Democracy," "War on Iraq?" "Unfinished American Revolution," Resource Guide, "US Involvement in Iraq,""Axis of Empire." Long Island DIY Scene, What Happens Next? Brazilian tour part 2, Smalltown, Kylesa, Crash & Burn.

#236/Jan '03. Mr. California & State Police, Iron Lung, Riff Randells, Chainsaw, *Artcore*, Latterman, Travis Cut, Phenomenauts, Pretty Little Flower, X-Cretas.

#238/Mar '03. World Burns To Death, Chronics, Vilently Ill, Dystopia, Pilger, Exotic Fever, Brezhnev, R.A.M.B.O., Blown To Bits, Put To Shame, Deconditioned, This Bike Is A Pipe Bomb, Monsters.

#239/Apr '03. Romanian D-beat, Meconium Records, Amazombies, Abandoned Hearts Club, Mike V. & the Rats, Nicki Sicki, Bigamists, Bolivia article, Negatives, Kuolema, Defiance.

#240/May '03. I Quit, Apers, Headless Horsemen, Lesser of Two, Barse, Nightmare, Music Zine Roundtable, Exploding Hearts, Flesh Packs, Blacklist Brigade.

#241/June '03. Tyrades, Lumbergh, The Stand By Me, New Mexican Disaster Squad, Cut the Shit, Libertinagem, 17th Class, the Ends, He Who Corrupts, Deathbag, Cria Cuervos.

#242/July '03. Pensacola & San Francisco punk protest reports, John Wilkes Booze, Anfo, Bob Suren, Migra Violenta, Jackson 8, *Snakepit* zine , Krigshot, the Rites, Deadfall.

#243/Aug '03. "Media Alliance and the FCC," Striking Distance, Malcontents, Invisible City, Books Lie, Charm City Art Space, Hopeless Dregs of Humanity, I Shot Cyrus, Sunday Morning Einsteins, What the Kids Want, Onion Flavored Rings.

#244/Sept '03. None More Black, Deadline, Rai Ko Ris, Boxed In, Exploding Hearts, Raving Mojos, Blackout Terror, Morticia's Lovers, Thee Fine Lines, *Trust* zine.

#245/Oct '03. No Time Left, Riistetyt, Intense Youth, The Gimmies, Ass End Offend, Artimus Pyle, La Fraction, Kung Fu Rick, The Horror.

#246/Nov '03. Punk & Resistance in Israel, Letters from Palestine, No Choice, FM Knives, Bury the Living, Marked Men, The Dirty Burds, Provoked.

#247/Dec '03. DSB, The Boils, Popular Shapes, Phoenix Foundation, Bathtub Shitter, Meet the Virus, Cropknox, "Punk Babies on Tour" Article.

#248/Jan '04. Discharge, Superhelicopter, Jed Whitey, Black Friday '29, Find Him And Kill Him, The Lids, Impratical Cockpit, Face Up To It, History Of Maximum Rocknroll Radio.

#249/Feb '04. From Ashes Rise, Hagar the Womb, This Is My Fist, Skip Jensen, Gride, Katy Otto/Mike Taylor Dialogue, John Yates, Pointing Finger.

#250/Mar '04. Best Records of 2003, Miami FTAA protests, Clorox Girls, FIYA, "La Villita: Chicago Pilsen Scene," Terminus Victor, Restarts, Damage Done, Knights of New Crusade.

#251/April '04. The Fuse!, Väkivaltaa, Modern Machines, Microcosm, Migra Violenta Euro tour diary, Allegiance, Neurotic Swingers, Xavier Lepaige Photos, Le Scrawl,Vrah.

#252/May '04. Fucked Up, Firestarter, Inepsy, Laukaus, Great Clearing Off, Radio Reelers, Extreme Noise Records, 46 Short, The State, John The Baker, Free Verse, Chrystaei Branchaw photos.

#253/June '04. Sweet J.A.P., Gorilla Angreb, Vöetsek, Minority Blues Band, Scruvy Dogs, Molotov Cocktail, Kidnappers, Schifosi, King Ly Chee, YDI.

#254/July '04. No Hope For The Kids, Dropdead, Diskords, Breakfast, Asschapel, I Excuse, Strung Up, To Hell & Back, Four Eyes, Lamant, Gammits MW, scene reports from Portland, Boston and Germany.

#255/Aug '04. "Punk's Not Dead, Reagan Is" Special Issue. Leatherface, Get It Away, The Hatepinks, Keen Monkey Work, New York City, South Dakota, Czech Republic, Philippines, Russia.

#256/Sep '04. The Observers, Witchhunt, Annihilation Time, Zann, Eskapo, FxPxO, Haymarket Riot, Fourth Rotor, Les Georges Lenigrad, Texas scene, Newfoundland, Indiana, England.

#257/Oct '04 The Election Issue, Jesse Townley, Matt Gonzalez, Rattus, Fighting Dogs, Hero Dishonest, Kickz, The Boss Martians, Reactionary Three, Slovakia, Australia, South Wales, South East Asia.

#258/Nov '04. Career Suicide, Cathy Wilkerson of the Weather Underground, No Fucker, The Repos, Dominatrix, Ashtray, Deadstop, Midnight Creeps, Michale Graves, The Diffs, The Shemps, Abi Yo Yo's.

#259/Dec '04. Bad Business, Penelope Houston, Rambo, AI, Ass, I Attack, The Krunchies, A-Lines, Insurgence Records, The Hates, Accidents, Massgrav, The Critics, Merciless Game, SF Hotel Workers Strike, photos from Japan, SoCal & the Bay Area.

#260/Jan '05. Technocracy, The Total End, Only Crime, True North, Partisans, For The Worst, Dick Spikie, Straight to Hell, Black Cross, Action, Ergs, Rusty Nails, Queer Activism in London, Greg Shaw tribute, John Peel tribute, Andrew "Stig" Sewell tribute, Beijing punk photos.

#261/Feb '05. Year End Top Tens, Riistetyt, Lost Cherrees, Complete Control, Cheap Sex, Gasoline Please, Beerzone, Greyskull, MOTO, Water Into Beer Fanzine, Swe-Punk scumpit, Japan punk photos, Bay Area punk photos, Texas, Russia, and Malaysia scene reports.

#262/March '05. Kärnvapen Attack, Neo Boys, Catholic Boys, Dead Moon, Wreckage, Frantix, Armitage Shanks, Wendy Kroys, To What End?, Cell Block 5, Bent Outta Shape, Ah-Nah Tron, Slovakia, Indonesia, and Illinois scenes.

#263/April '05. All Crusties Spending Loud Night 2004, Bombenalarm, Battleship, APA, The Black Lips, Words That Burn, Flamingo 50, The Low Budgets, Mellakka, I Object, Antisect, Bay Area scene report, South Coast UK scene report.

#264/May '05. Crime, Love Songs, Bruce Banner, Intent, The Holy Mountain, Have Heart, The Bill Bondsmen, The Real Losers, archive photos, Bay Area scene photos, Taiwan and Rochester scene reports.

#265/June '05. Endless Nightmare, Hard Skin, Kolokol, Amebix, Transistor Transistor, The Safes, The Detonators, Finland scene report, France scene report, SoCal scene report.

#266/July '05. The Carbonas, MDC, Destrux, Unkind, Hiretsukan, Giant Haystacks, Ohuzaru, Teenage Harlets, Michigan scene report, San Diego scene report, Eugene, OR scene report, photos.

#267/August '05. Knugen Faller, Sleeper Cell, Motorama, Gulcher Records history, Army of Jesus, The Slicks, Thee Merry Widows, Rotten Sound, The Faction (UK), Czech and New Zealand scene reports.

#268/September '05. Signal Lost, Gulcher Records history part two, Teenage Bottlerocket, Mattilda (aka Matt Bernstein Sycamore), The Spectacle, Bang Sugar Bang, Chumbawamba, Reason of Insanity, Forward To Death, Flyer art, Florida Scene Report, Bay Area scene report, photos.

#269/October '05. Hammer, Desastre, Human Eye, Les Bellas, Gasmask Terror, Randy "Biscuit" Turner tribute, Stalag 17 (UK), Stepbrothers, Retching Red, Weaving the Deathbag, Gather, Chicago and SoCal scene reports.

#270/November '05. Clorox Girls European Tour, Czolgosz, Regulations, Time Flys, Taxi, No More Lies, Oil!, Paddy Costello of the Dillinger Four, Smartpils, Revenge of Mongoloid, Pisschrist, Scene reports: Puerto Rico, UK, Russia.

#271/December '05. Besthöven, Abductee SD, Tractor Sex Fatality, George Harrison, Deathtoll, Photos by icki, Ice & The Iced, the Ulcers, Chimps Eat Bananas, Deranged / Criminal IQ / Kick'n'Punch Records. Scene reports: Iowa, Maine, Illinois.

#272/January '06. Conga Fury, Let's Grow, Frustration, Bastardass, Icons of Filth, Burial, Hrydjuverk, Cranked Up!, Urrke T & the Midlife Crisis, Tropezio, *Baboon of Sickness* zine. Scene reports: Austin, France, Michigan, Larry Wolfley photos.

#273/February '06. Fuses, Endstand, Out Cold, Pedestrians, Acts of Sedition, BadEatingHabits, Western Addiction, Jesus Fucking Christ, Toxic Waste, Punk photo spread, St. Louis, USA & Brighton, UK scene reports.

#274/March '06. Best of 2005, Formaldehyde Junkies, Brutal Knights, Kansan Uutiset, Hatred Surge, A-Heads, Manikin, Upinatem, Hips, Boston scene report, Punk photo spread.

#275/April '06. History of ABC No Rio (Part One), Ringers, Missbrukarna, '90s garage punk scumpit, Anatomi-71, After the Bombs, Rubella Ballet, RIP Pig Champion, Ricky Adam interview and photographs, Sean McGhee, Hard Skin US tour diary.

#276/May '06. "Is Business Killing Punk Rock?" business survey (Part One), History of ABC No Rio (Part Two), Vitamin X Asian Pacific tour diary, Soviet Valves Suburban Death Machine, Frustrations, George Hurchalla, Scene reports: Czech Republic and Greece.

#277/June '06. "Is Business Killing Punk Rock?" business survey (Part Two), Imperial Leather, Boom Boom Kid, Vitamin X Asian Pacific Tour (part two), "How to Make It Big!" by the Phantom Surfers, Magrudergrind, Poland.

#278/July '06. Billy Childish, Death Token, The First Step, Ramsey Kanaan of AK Press, Headache City, Deconditioned, Under Pressure, Insuiciety, Instigators, Malaysia Scene, Bay Area Scene Pics.

#279/August '06. Mika Miko, The Fall, Cardiac Arrest, Digger & the Pussycats, Massmord, Insect Warfare, The Astronauts, Canary Islands Photo Spread, Four Slicks, The Fallout, PAWNS, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, & Umeå, Sweden scenes.

#280/September '06. Hjerte Stop, Grupo Sub-1, Desperate Bicycles, Bill Daniel interview and photo spread, APF Brigade, Disconvenience, Southkore Fest photo spread, Rosenbombs, Up the Voltage, Euro photo spread, Svartenbrandt, Asheville, NC & world wide punk scene reports.

#281/October '06. Out With a Bang, Redd Kross, Derek Lyn Plastic, We March, Alan Milman, Rat Traps, Blood Robots, The Scarred, Gilbert Switzer, Japan & US photo spreads, Sweden & UK scene reports.

#282/November '06. The Feelers, PESD, Toxic Ephex, Auktion, Bruise Violet, *Trust* fanzine, The Homosexuals, The Effigies, Rat City Riot, New York City & North Carolina scene reports.

#283/December '06. Jay Reatard interview & photos, Crimes Against Humanity Records, A Touch of Hysteria, Doris Fanzine, Kvoteringen, '90s Punk Scumpit Part II, Black Chrome, The Dirty Water Club, photos, Tokyo scene report.

#284/January '07. Margaret Thrasher, 924 Gilman at 20 Years, Order of the White Rose, Regress, Subhumans (UK) Part One, Blank Its, Condenada, Genetic Control, photos, Syracuse & San Diego scene reports.

#285/February '07. Randy "Biscuit" Turner of the Big Boys & the early Texas punk scene, Lemuria, Ruin, Subhumans (UK) Part Two, The Blinds, Tranzistors, ANS, Riot This, La Piovra, Bay Area scene pics, Barcelona, Spain scene report.

#286/March '07. Best of 2006, Smartut Kahol Lavan, Electric Kisses, Holy Shit!, Lost Cherrees Part One, Go!, Kraljevo, Serbia, and Bakersfield, CA scene reports.

#287/April '07. Alicja Trout, Keith Rosson (*Avow* zine), Crap Corps, The Vicious, Scum System Kill, Lost Cherrees Part Two, Restless Youth, SBV, Australia, Kyiv, Ukraine, and Pittsburgh, PA scene reports.

#288/May '07. Clockcleaner, Pisschrist, The Rats (Sweden), Conflict (US), The Viletones, Violent Tumor, Czech Republic and East Texas scene reports.

#289/June '07. Ultimo Resorte, Kursk, Masstrauma, Social Circkle, Final Approach, Post Punk Kitchen, Southern Death Cult, Portland Drummers, Timisoara, Copenhagen, and Pampanga scene reports.

#290/July '07. Stormcrow, Merkit, Solid Decline, Monster Squad, Sex Vid, Vivisick, Warkrime, Top Ten, *We're Gonna Fight* zine, White Cross, Berlin scene report.

#291/August '07. *MRR* 25th Anniversary Issue. Martin Sprouse, Tim Yohannon, No Slogan, Ruidosa Inmundicia, Chinese Telephones, Vaseline Children, Anti-System, Dave Roche, 6-page retrospective photo-spread, Kawakami/ Disclose obituary, Brazil scene report.

#292/September '07. New Bloods, Chronic Seizure, Outraged, Geriatric Unit, Active Distribution, Gruk, The Mods, No Defences, The Fakes, Trashies Tour Report, Mexico scene report.

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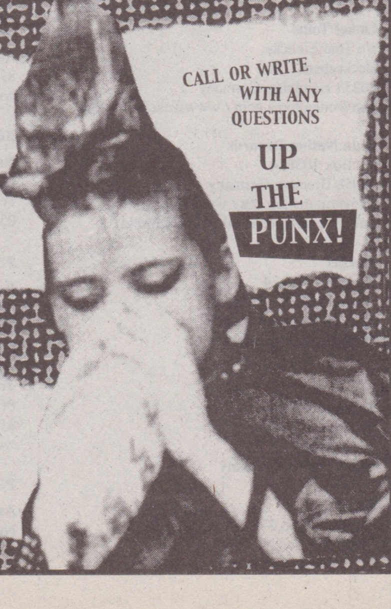

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LETTERS

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MRR—

In the latest issue (#292), while I support you putting punks of all boys, girls, races, sexual orientations, and all that Gilman Street stuff on the cover of *MRR*, WHAT THE FUCK IS A VIOLIN PLAYER DOING ON THE COVER OF *MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL!!!* A VIOLIN PLAYER! IT'S *MAXIMUM FUCKIN' ROCKNROLL!* NOT *MASTERPIECE THEATRE!*

I don't care if you're the second coming of the Raincoats and a bunch of other shit that Tim Yo and *Maximum Rocknroll* gave the boot back in the '90s, once the violin leaves the case, the "rock" potential goes the way of Jethro Tull and Charlie Daniels Band!!! Bands all the time that say they're "the next evolution of rock," this just means added girlfriend on cello. Fuck that! Loud guitars and punk forever!

—Rat Dawg

MRR—

I just read John Fahy's letter addressing the MySpace subject that's been consistently spoken about in the letters section. I didn't pick up *MRR* in June or July (been busy and broke) so I haven't read all of the letters, but I couldn't help chuckling at some of the things said, some of which were in response to me.

First off, I can see the point he's trying to make about not whoring yourself out to Newscorp. But, I think the argument is quite weak, especially concerning a free website that gets its money from ad banners. I'd say every trip to MySpace by myself gives the horrible Newscorp about one-tenth of one penny. In return I am networked with thousands of bands, zines, special interest groups, anything. To me, it's worth it, considering every time I mail a stamped envelope I'm giving the government 40 cents, not to mention 7 cents on every dollar I spend. To me it's worth it.

John's opposition to MySpace (and I figure lots of other things, but I don't know) is technically valid, though as far as I'm concerned is more symbolic than anything else. Symbolism is neat, but you can't base everything off pointless symbolism, unless you think patting yourself on the back is going to bring about radical social change. I'd say refraining from things you're morally opposed to is valid in most cases, but I still have my doubts about a networking website.

My only argument for it is one that he rejects (and sometimes rightly so). Working within the system to change it, to exploit it and eventually bring it down. His examples are pretty piss poor, citing Rancid (sucks ass) and Epitaph (ugh!) and even a major motion picture, Fight Club (tripe crap), as illustrations of failure to successfully work inside the system. If these are the bands, labels, movies, hell, strategies of infiltration, no wonder you're so disillusioned that they don't work at all. Spiky-haired drunk punx and Edward Norton aren't going to change society or the system to any real extent. You want real infiltration, then start up successful DIY websites, run for public office (I'm not an anarchist, so this is not blasphemy to me), become a teacher, actually be a part of the system. Like I said, spiky haired train hopping crusty squatters aren't going to change shit. Living outside the system does nothing but strengthen it.

This doesn't seem to register with Fahy, who deems anything of the sort as complacency. He keeps referring to how weak and complacent punk is, and I'm pretty sure we've all heard that argument before. I still think its bullshit. If nothing else, you complain that after Fight Club came out, there wasn't a rash of building bombings, so it's not revolutionary. I'd assume there'd be at least one bombing, if you weren't so complacent. If you don't like Against Me!, then don't pay attention to them. I sure as hell don't. Everyone's already turned their back on them; I don't think they're really still playing shows with punk bands, unless you count stadium shows with Green Day in that category. I also don't know what other course of action to take when a band sells out—you can't really catch someone committing a crime before they do it, most of the time. I also wonder if I should consider you complacent because there was not a one-man crime wave of punching Tom Gabel in the face.

Also, as long as I'm picking this letter apart piece by piece, I don't listen to garage rock or anything like that, but I'm sure not fond of him picking on bands that don't talk about "important issues." Even if I agree with the stances of most bands, is it really so bad that not every band tells us the same opinion on anarchism, veganism, pacificism, anti-war, anti-this, anti-that? Of course that stuff's important but man there are seriously a good thousand songs about veganism, and a thousand songs on why war is so shitty. So jumping on some garage band because they bitch about girls and not what they eat is pretty lame to me.

Oh and the reason I responded in the first place. Fahy totally took the letter I wrote (in June, I think?) out of context either on purpose or just through lack of reading comprehension. The point is that if you don't like MySpace, create a viable alternative. Until then I'll take the fact that almost every punk band, big or small, has a MySpace page because it is not really that big a deal, not because every punk but you is complacent.

I don't mean to single you out so much but you wrote a long letter.

—Ryan Ferret

Dear Maximum Rocknroll—

In the August issue, John Fahy states that punk music and folk music is anti-establishment, anti-war, and anti-corporate in nature, and Ben G. mentions the actions of Earth Crisis fans. I remember the episode of *America's Most Wanted* that talked about the straight edge scene and the A.L.F. guys breaking into labs. I was in prison with a couple of Earth Liberation Front members last year in Oregon. They were both straight-up Christians, they weren't punk, etc. but they still smashed the state enough to get life in prison under the Patriot Act.

Punks in general don't really do much in terms of direct action. It's all about passive resistance and Thoreau and civil disobedience. You're unwilling to fight fire with fire and then you whine about how your scene is being killed by the mainstream and sugarcoated and mass-produced and sold at your local mall because it's weak. "The weak and the botched shall perish: first principle of our humanity. They ought even to be helped perish." (—Nietzsche)

What everybody conveniently avoids admitting is that you need the government and you need war and you need corporations. Without those things you become obsolete. You need something to rebel against. Anton LaVey said this about Christianity and Satanism. You ignorantly call people who actually do stand up against the government fascist and monsters

and shit like that. Because you don't want total war. You want to continue your ouroborus [?] cycle of passive resistance. You think drawing an X on your hand or putting out a record or a zine less than 500 people will ever hear or read. You talk about the Haymarket Riots and Sacco and Vanzetti but what has been done recently? A few rocks thrown at the police? People like Timothy McVeigh and Robert J. Matthews are good examples of what needs to be done. So fucking what if McVeigh killed children? Those kids would just grow up and become capitalist pigs like their parents. But anarchist and punks will never make a stand like that. They're too focused on record collecting and arguing about trivial scene politics. You want to smash the state? Sell your record collection to a hipster on eBay and buy a gun. If everybody who reads *MRR* were to go out and actually do something like that, go out with your finger on the trigger like that old Clash song, then maybe change could take place, but that won't happen will it?

No, you continue doing nil and going nowhere and attacking people like myself who don't have their heads up their ass. I'm a misanthrope. I have no faith in the human race. Man is an end. There is no future for anybody. All you have to look forward to is dystopia. If I'm wrong and I'm being too cynical and spiteful and negative then let's see you change the world. All around me I see people destroyed by the government. They do threat assessment on people now before they release them from prison so if they want they can legally keep you in prison forever. Even if a judge only sentenced them to 14 months. It's sad but true. But isn't everything about this world like that? You talk about people having it hard in foreign countries. I only get out of my cell about four hours a week. When I'm not in my cell I'm locked in a chain link fence cage similar to a dog kennel. Some people can't handle it so they mutilate themselves just to go to the hospital. Some people don't live through it. It's fucked up. Anyway, if anybody gives a shit write me a letter, etc. I'm running out of shit to read. None of the prisoner resources listed on *MRR*'s prisoner information sheet respond to my letters. And if anybody's interested, google my band "Nothingistrue." RRRecords.com and CFProd.com/FA distros Nothingistrue releases.

—Kyle Nanneman, #68328-065
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MRR—

In the last issue of this magazine there was a hysterical rant decrying the supposed apolitical nature of some factions of the San Francisco Bay Area punk scene. It criticized our band, Warkrime, as well as us as individuals. The article was full of inaccuracies, misquotes, and outright lies, and demands a response from us. Two things should be noted before we proceed any further. First of all, Warkrime, our friends, and everyone else involved in the Bay Area scene stands firmly against prejudice of all kinds, whether it be homophobia, sexism, racism, classism, or any other form of prejudice. We live in the most diverse region in the United States, and have been interacting with all different varieties of human beings since we were small children. Secondly, throughout the article, the author, Hannah Dobbz, refers to the Bay Area with the possessive "our." Ms. Dobbz is not indigenous to the Bay Area, and has only lived here for a few years. She does not, nor has she ever, booked shows, played in bands, made zines, or any other activity that could be construed as involvement in the Bay Area scene (all activities that every member of Warkrime has participated in for some years now). We find it the highest form of conceit to claim ownership over a scene that one has no involvement in more significant than residing within the city limits.

We would like to address division between politically correct and anti-PC people in the punk scene. We hate to use the tern "politically correct," because it was a word invented by Republicans in the 1980s to attack a whole slew of social advances and programs created during the movements of 1960s, such affirmative action. But the term will suffice, because it an easy word to use to describe this ideological division. We find the Stalinesque re-writing of punk history baffling. We refer primarily to American hardcore punk here, the genre we're most familiar with, but we imagine the same conclusions apply to many other subgenres of the movement. Punk has always been full of vitriol, fury, and controversy (and if you want to be part of something that isn't, become a raver). The Bad Brains were homophobic. Black Flag had a song called "White Minority" and another song called "Slip It In" justifying rape. Minor Threat had a song called "Guilty of Being White." Reagan Youth dressed up in KKK uniforms when they played and chanted "zeig heil" in their title song. The two best bands from "our" city, Dead Kennedys and the Avengers, both used the word "nigger" in their lyrics. Even the name of the genre, "punk," is itself a homophobic slur. We could continue with these examples, but we believe the point is evident.

We list these examples not to say that this is the proper way or to encourage the use of slurs and prejudice within the scene. We often refrain from similar antics and extremes of many of our favorite bands specifically as to not encourage prejudice. Two of the three current members of Warkrime are anarcho-syndicalist, one is vegan and the rest of us are vegetarians. Rather, we list these examples to show that the range of political expression within the punk scene that is allowed has significantly narrowed. What is deemed legitimate artistic expression and what is out of bounds seems completely arbitrary to us. We've observed time and time again an individual being lectured for some transgression against the sacred punk code of right and wrong, but when we examine the individual doing the lecturing, they are committing an act that offends our ethics. For instance, a short time ago our friend was being chewed out for saying the word "fag." When we pointed out that the individual doing the lecturing was smoking a cigarette and wearing leather, two things which actually cause death—unlike a word—and in my opinion far worse, his response was "well, that's different." When we further pointed out he was drinking beer from a company with a record of large donations to the Republican Party, thus implicating him financially in efforts to prevent gays and lesbians from getting married, the response was the same.

Once again, we give this example not to defend saying "fag," as homophobia is appalling to us, but to question why in the punk scene one act is criticized and the other is dismissed or legitimized. It amazes us that no one in the punk scene seems to question smoking, an act that kills at the same time it funds huge multi-national corporations. Why is it not considered oppressive that nearly every show we attend or play we come back reeking of smoke and having to breathe fumes all night that could potentially kills us, despite the fact that no one in our band smokes? Yet every political punk we see always seems to be lighting up. There are countless more examples of similar holier-than-thou hypocrisy, but alas we do not have room here to write about all of them

Another point we wish to address is the criticism bands that use shock value as part of their performance, like us, are obsolete. Ms. Dobbz dismisses bands that use shock value as old, outdated, some kind of lost relic from the late 1970s. Clearly it is effective, as she and her cohorts are quite obviously offended by us. In any case, punk is over 30 years old at this point. Ronald Reagan is dead. We're all acting out what amounts to an anachronistic fantasy at this point. To pretend that taking a positive "make a change" attitude is an original stance in punk compared to our opinions is a joke. Such a view is clearly proven wrong by even the most cursory look at punk history. Better Youth Organization or Revolution Summer anyone? And let's not even get started on *Evasion* chic. *On the Road* by Jack Kerouac addressed the same issues (with crisper writing we might add), and that was published in 1957.

The bottom line is this: We support real politics. Real political change will not occur because one neutralized one's language, or

because one hopped on a train after reading *Off the Map*, or after writing another song about the horrors of war, or because one breaks into Spanish even though one is a white native English speaking suburbanite. Nor is real political change going happen from forming Black Blocs that land one in 850 Bryant for the night. We have no pretense of changing the world through a music scene that by its own rules must be marginalized and rejected. Anyone who does is lying to themselves.

We would like to conclude this letter by saying the fact that Ms. Dobbz advocates for us coming to physical harm, or at least coercion out of the scene that we contribute to, is very shocking as well as incredibly totalitarian, ignorant and violent—the very crimes of which we are accused. Furthermore, as victims of hate crimes ourselves (Max will gladly show you scars received from a stabbing by a Nazi skinhead, or tell you about the time he observed overzealous anti-Israel demonstrators telling his Jewish parents that "Hitler should have finished the job"), we find these kind of straw man attacks do nothing to solve prejudice, and in fact weaken efforts to combat it—the political equivalent of crying wolf. The United States remains a disgustingly prejudiced place and it is important to find ways to address this that are more effective than hysterical and false rants about an unimportant punk band. The amount of time, messageboard posts, and print space that have been wasted on Warkrime, a band who usually plays to less than 20 people and influences no one, is ridiculous. We hope we as punks can work past these melodramatic distractions and get back to the real problem in the Bay Area punk scene—the loss of key DIY venues. Let's talk about that.

—Maxwell Raynard, Brace Belden, Sean Gallagher of Warkrime

PS: Obviously no one letter can satisfactorily explain our ideology, or why we arrived at the conclusions we did. We strongly encourage people to contact us and communicate with us any questions, comments, rants, or hate mail they may have. The punk scene is full of gossips and cowards, and we advise people to speak with us before passing judgment or believing everything they hear or read. Contact us through myspace.com or email at max_raynard@yahoo.com or sickpleasure415@hotmail.com

Dear Maxi Rocker—

I write to you in response to the guest column in issue #292, September 2007 by Hannah E. Dobbz. Ms. Dobbz uses this space to trash the SF band Warkrime, specifically singer Brace Belden and bass player Max Retard, calling them "piece of shit teenage Nazis," "fascist fucks," and some other garbage. I could pick apart the column piece by piece to discredit Ms. Dobbz but I imagine the boys will be writing in as well to defend themselves. I have known Brace and Max for a long time. I met Brace when he was just 13 years old and over the years he has started a band, written a zine, put on shows, gone on tour, and really been one of the leaders of the Bay Area youth and their scene. Their scene packs Burnt Ramen for a locals-only show of teenage bands on any given night, how awesome is that? To cut this short I simply want to say to readers of *MRR* that Ms. Dobbz has grossly misinformed you in a malicious column that was irresponsible and damaging. I vouch for Warkrime; trust me they are not Nazis. They are punks and punks are misunderstood. Cheers buds.

—Scotty Karate
Deadfall / Voetsek / Tankcrimes Records
PO Box 3495
Oakland, CA 94609
scottykarate@hotmail.com

Dear MRR staff + readership—

Poser alert: Don't book After the Bombs from Montreal. After they played Albany these dumbasses started a fire in our backyard, then their guitarist evidently forgot whatever he learned from all of his shitty crust records when he narked to the cops and we got a ticket.

Thank you,
—The Jury
Albany, Land of 518ia
jurypunx@gmail.com

Max R&R Crew—

Hey what's up, I just wanted to drop a line and put my two cents in. I'm comin' at ya from behind the walls of High Desert State Prison—a maximum security lock-up in NorCal. I recently got the 25th anniversary issue and was a little disappointed to say the least. I couldn't believe you didn't have any pix or commentary on Code of Honor, Sick Pleasure, the Lewd, Avengers, Society Dog, Crucifix, Fang, etc. etc. and what about Swingin' Utters and Workin' Stiffs? Some of the best street punk out there and from right in your backyard to boot. To make up for it I think you should do a whole issue on Street Punk and Oi! featuring Discipline, Cock Sparrer, Street Dogs, Swingin' Utters (if they're still around). I know they've got The Filthy Thieving Bastards going—Smogtown, Boils, U.S. Bombs (hell, you could do a whole issue on Duane himself; between the Bombs, Hunns, and Duane Peters Gunfight, he's a pretty busy man, not to mention Disaster Records and producing one of the best records of the modern punk era, Smogtown's *Fuhrers of the New Wave*). Anyway, back to the Street Punk/Oi! issue, you could throw in some Blood for Blood, and the kings The Bruisers, and whatever happened to the Workin' Stiffs anyway? "Liquid Courage" is a classic! I'm gonna cut this short; if there's any punk or skin birds that wanna lighten my day, I'm in dire need of a pen-pal. I'm a lonely SoCal Hooligan that's getting out in a few years, any and all mail will be greatly appreciated. I'm gone, till next time—keep the faith and don't let the bastards grind ya down! Long live the Bruisers.

Yours truly,
—Derek Bryan

P.S. G.D.M.F.S.O.B. What about Bad Posture? C'mon now!

A big fat P.P.S. I didn't want to get into politics but how can I not in the state the world and our country is in right now? I know most of you are peace-loving, crusty, hippy fucks, get over it! There's no such thing as peace. Peace time is just "preparation for war time." War is the natural state of man, there's been wars since the beginning of time. During WWI and WWII people weren't protesting, people were supporting the troops; ever hear of the war effort? It's become so clichéd and passé to hate Bush and the war. You should be ashamed; Amercian kids are dying over there daily. What you need to do is take a long, hard look at why you think the way you do. Especially you Al Quint, you fat hippy fuck, sitting in your nice suburban home in Dearborn, Michigan or wherever the fuck you live. Put some Slayer or FEAR in your musical diet and get off that hippy shit that's encompassed your soul. America and Britain didn't win WWII with peace marches and president bashing. They won by pounding the other side into dust. As American General George Patton once said, "Nobody ever defended anything successfully: there is only attack and attack and attack some more." Rebuilding comes later. I'm going to leave you with this quote by philosopher John Stuart Mill: "War is an ugly thing, but not the ugliest of things. A man who has nothing which he is willing to fight for is a miserable creature who has no chance of being free, unless made and kept so by the exertion of better men than himself." Put that in your peace pipe and smoke it Al Quint. I guarantee you'll be singing a different tune when a terrorist cell moves in next door. Ever heard of Daniel Pearl? He's a US journalist who was kidnapped and beheaded on film, I wonder how his family feels about the war. "Weapons, Weapons, Weapons..." —D.I.

Derek,

OK, first to answer your question about the 25th Anniversary issue: The photos were selected based on the materials available. We don't

have a photograph of every punk band from San Francisco, and if we did, they wouldn't all fit into a six-page photospread. Think about it. As for Oi/street punk coverage, I for one am not opposed to it; I'm not afraid to admit I saw and enjoyed the Swingin' Utters, Bruisers, Blood for Blood, etc. in their day. We're hoping to run some upcoming interviews with some anti-fascist Oi/street punk bands from Europe and South America in the near future.

As for your political views—well, there's so much I disagree with that it would be kinda pointless to get into it here. I don't think we'd ever see eye-to-eye. But is it so difficult to understand that I don't want American kids dying in Iraq, nor do I want Iraqis dying? I don't think the US is preventing potential terrorist attacks with our foreign policy, I think we're provoking them. It's not a fad or cliché to hate Bush or the war, just 'cause a lot of people do it. Besides that, I'm really not interested in "pounding" anyone "into dust." Guess you'll have to deal with that.

—Chris/MRR

Maximum Rocknroll—

I was just writing to make some corrections and add some stuff to our interview that was in the September issue. I come from Taft, CA and that is in Kern County not Kirk County; also my first punk show was in Bakersfield, no Bakersville. The photo printed was taken by Alisha Giles and we can be contacted at myspace.com/thefakesmusic. This is in regard to the Fakes interview. Sorry for the bad spelling and shitty grammar. I'm not trying to bitch or anything. Thanks for running our interview, you guys are doing a great job. Also thanks to Isaac Smith for interviewing us.

Thanks a lot,

—Hero Fake

Dear MRR—

Just wanted to clear up a few things about issue #6 of my zine *Ploppy Pants* reviewed in issue #291 of your rag. Firstly, I didn't write the poems about shit or article on shitting your pants for sexual pleasure, these were clearly credited to D.J. Weston inside the zine. She also does a zine on the subject and any scat/piss fans out there should get in touch with her at 45 Richard Avenue, Wivenhoe, Colchester, Essex, C07 9JQ, UK.

Secondly, while people shitting their pants can make for a funny story (and I am always looking for a good one to fill my letters page—hint, hint) I am more interested in society's taboos, so while I do find the idea of people shitting their pants "fun," I don't think it's "funny" and it's not my intention to make fun of this fetish.

Thirdly, there was a complaint about my grammar—sorry about that but I was too busy listening to Saxon and drinking white cider in my school days.

OK, cheers for the review and keep up the good work—DIY CUT + PASTE TILL DEAFNESS!

—Roddy Ploppy Pants

Pillars, Strathmiglo Road, Fife, KY15 7AD, Scotland

P.S. RIP Kawakami

Obituary—

On July 29th, TV anchor and talk show host Tom Snyder passed away. His tenure was ABC, but NBC most notably picked him up for the show that followed Johnny Carson called *The Tomorrow Show*. In their subsequent televised obituary on Tom Snyder, NBC said nothing about punk bands being promoted [on the show]. They were more than happy to show John Lennon, Mick Jagger, and Charles Manson.

It is a well-known fact that Snyder had the last word in the decision-making, choosing guests for the Tomorrow Show. Sure, he refused to have the Sex Pistols on the show (probably because of their swearing). Who is punk? After seeing a video clip saying/pronouncing the band name Black Flag. Then Barbara Walters interviewed Black Flag's bassist Chuck Dukowski about punk. The next show eventually appeared when Mr. Snyder asked Wendy O. Williams (RIP) questions about punk and her band the Plasmatics played their hit "Master Plan." I remembered Ritchie Spotts playing the guitar.

—Craig J. Hill

Redwood City, CA

Dear Dave and MRR—

Thank you for taking the time to respond to my letter regarding the metal column but I disagree with your argument. True, a lot of punks (including me) listen to metal. A lot of punks listen to rap. Big deal. Is *MRR* now trying to be all things to all people, or is it going to stay a music magazine focused on punk rock, with a secondary focus on politics? In response to your quote—if Darkthrone isn't punk and they say they're not political, they've got nothing to do with *MRR*. There's no shortage of people writing about metal elsewhere.

Likewise, if *MRR* does not accept ads from Relapse, Osmose, or Century Media on principle, then it stands to reason their releases should not be featured in the zine.

Way back when, as I recall it, Tim Yo's idea of what was punk got rather narrow. He allowed music columns to cover the stuff he felt didn't belong in the review section but that many still considered punk. As such the "metal" column covered bands with a metal sound but a punk philosophy like Unbroken, Agathocles, Liar, etc. The last two incarnations of the column have taken it completely out of punk territory, covering the cheesey likes of Nile, Unleashed, and many more bigger label bands with high door prices and expensive t-shirts.

Yeah, *Don't Try* is just a column, but after reading *MRR* for twenty years I don't feel like it's just a zine. And I don't feel like straight-up metal should be a part of it. It's still Tim's mag as far as I'm concerned and there's still idiots like me debating useless stuff like this.

Thanks for listening,

—Julie

P.S. My apologies for calling Dissection's singer a racist. Turns out he took part in killing a *gay* man. Boy, is my face red!

P.P.S. Maybe *MRR* should change their policy on Fang ads.

Julie,

Though I unfortunately never met Tim Yo, his ideals have been passed along and kept alive by everyone who has worked here since his death. Your assessment of the columns' function is accurate—the music columnists are given more leeway regarding coverage of bands/labels that would not be reviewed or allowed to buy advertising in the magazine.

I'm on the same page with you in that I believe MRR *should be a punk music magazine with a secondary focus on politics—when Dave pitched his idea for a column, he expressed an interest in covering more independent bands than the previous "metal" columnist—but at the same time it's my personal opinion that the columnists should have the freedom to write about what they want, whether or not I agree with what they're saying.*

I'm not sure what Tim would have done in this situation. I do know that I have somewhat less strict boundaries for what I consider "punk enough" for coverage in the magazine. My personal tastes are more towards the artier/poppier/experimental end of things (I pretty much hate metal on a musical level, and the "metal scene" in particular), and in that sense you can expect to see a somewhat wider scope of bands covered than what might have appeared were Tim still running the magazine.

However, you bring up some good points. Mainstream-oriented metal doesn't belong in MRR. *Dave hasn't seen your letter yet, but hopefully he'll take some of your views to heart—and I will avoid having to police what he writes about on a label-by-label, band-by-band level.*

—Chris

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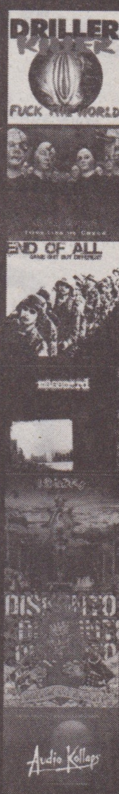

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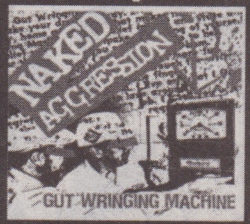

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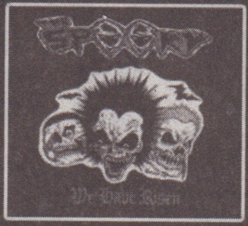

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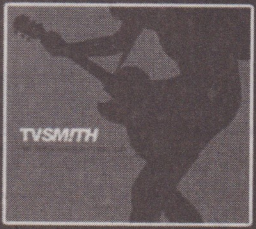

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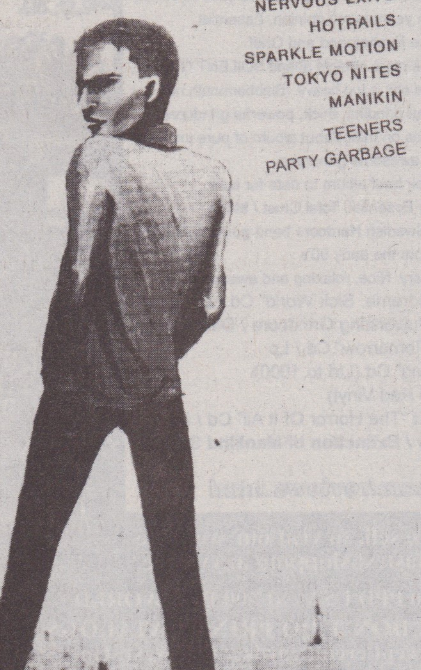

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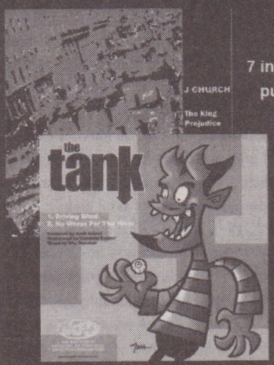

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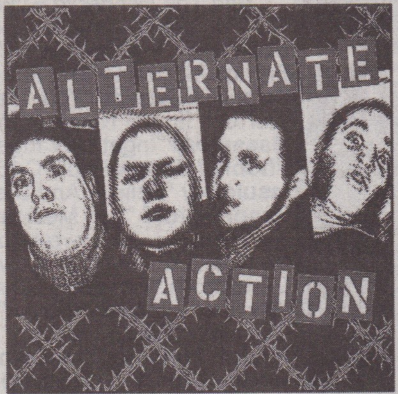

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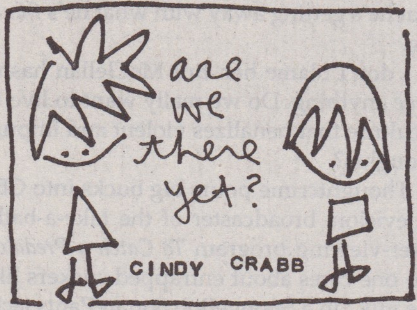


How We Turned Our Shitty Little Town Into a Punk Rock Mecca, Ten-point Program.

1. Hang Out
2. Create a Visible Public Presence
3. Show Space
4. Dance
5. Form Bands
6. Freak & Punk Unity
7. Invite Strangers
8. Treat Bands
9. Deal with Nazis, Sexist Assholes or Speedfreakhippypunkgutterscumbags
10. Events and Projects to Draw People In

When I moved to my town, there were just five punks, mostly just graduated from high school, plus three IWW folks, some EarthFirsters and some art freaks. Here are some of the things we did to transform our shitty town into a punk mecca:

1. Hang Out.

Never underestimate the power of sitting around in public as a way to draw people into the world of punkness. Punks look cool. Just by standing around looking good we become a vibrant propaganda tool.

2. Create a Visible Public Presence.

Posters, flyers, graffiti, public art. Nothing is more depressing than a town with punks that just post on the internet; nothing is better than walking around a shitty town and finding an Anarchy sign spraypainted behind the grocery store. You must put up flyers about shows. If there aren't shows in your town yet, put up flyers about other stuff. Flyers with a main graphic focus on girls' body parts are not rebellious; they are jock. Make flyers about your beliefs. Make art and staple it to telephone poles. Make it look like there is something mysterious going on that people should want to be a part of.

3. Show Space.

Basement shows rule. No basement is too short or too small. Even if people can't pogo, they can still skank. Our first show space was a storefront on a crappy main road, and we had an art project in it, where anyone could pick a section of the wall and paint it. It made it so that punks that otherwise would feel weird as hell just trying to hang out could come and be busy, but still part of things. Our next space was in a short basement with a small creek running through it. We built a retaining wall to try and keep the water away from the electricity. The whole place was cavern-like; the energy just hung in the moldy air and the stage was just a few pallets. Everyone said it would suck to have shows there, but actually they were the best shows ever, with everyone crammed in and dancing and sweating, mashed together, and trying to see and going wild in the sweetest way.

4. Dancing.

I can not overstate the importance of dancing. Dancing rules. Dancing is punk! At first, no one danced at the shows in Asheville, then me and my sister decided to dance as hard as we could to the entire set, no matter how bad the band might suck. It was difficult, especially because in the beginning there would only be about five to ten people watching the show, and everyone thought we were crazy, but after a while everyone started dancing, and then when new people came, they thought that's what punk was all about—dancing like fucking maniacs. Punk is participatory, not entertainment. If the audience is not working as hard as the band, then it is not totally punk.

5. Form Bands.

Everyone can play. Everyone can scream. If I can form a band, you can. When I first started to try to scream, I just made a terrible choked croaking noise and I cried because I felt so stupid. Now I scream like hell. Also, I've been playing the bass with only two fingers and only the top two strings for about eight years. It's fine.

6. Freak & Punk Unity.

One of the sad things about our shitty town becoming a punk mecca is laziness and scene isolation. In the beginning, we all needed each other—punks and freaks and weirdos and intellectuals. If we wanted things to be interesting, we had to make it happen. There was the beautiful heyday of punk and freak unity, with amazing talent shows and musicals and cabarets and dance performances, but then, by the end, so many punks had meccaed out to our town that they thought they no longer needed the freaks, and it became just a bunch of isolated people who didn't need or care about each other any more.

7. Invite Strangers.

So, the truth is, a lot of people are sort of afraid of punks. And a lot of people are scared to go to weird new places. So, it is important to reach out in person to people who look like they might secretly want to join the scene. Give people flyers, and talk to strangers, and if they come to the show, talk to them and make them feel welcome. I was always really shy, but then when I ran the door at the club, I got to watch how so many people felt uncomfortable and unsure what to do with themselves, and I realized it's important to be a welcoming committee an introduce people to each other, and do all the usual things of a good hostess. I've been to many towns where the only people who talked to me at the punk show were guys who wanted to sleaze on me, and I think it's so important that girls talk to girls, non-sleazers talk to the new people. Unity!

8. Treat Bands.

OK. So, if you book bands, be nice to them. Cook them food and give them a place to stay. If you are not going to have a place for them to stay, tell them that ahead

of time. Also, give the bands money. Unless you are a greedy self-absorbed capitalist bastard, paying the band should come first over show-space rent. Figure out some other way to pay show-space rent. Also, local bands should play first. If you start to create a scene where people only love the local band and only dance to the local band and the local band plays last, it sucks. Just play first, and make everyone stay for the touring band. Create a culture where people want to show off for the touring bands, and show them how much your town cares about punk by going wild and giving the band the best show they've ever had—I mean, dance!

9. Deal with Nazis, Sexist Assholes, or Speedfreakhippypunkgutterscumbags.

Don't let nazis into your shows. You can tell them that if they quit being racist assholes then they can come in, but otherwise, no. Same with the fuckers who grope women. It is good to have some bitter ex-punks or bitter tough old punks around, because they are usually good at beating up nazis and other scumbags if necessary.

10. Projects and Events to Draw People In.

Punk is about creating our own lives, creating lives worth living, creating new and vibrant culture outside of capitalism's corrosive effects. Punk picnics, punk kickball, punk scavenger hunts, punk organizing, punk zines. And brainstorming up your own ten-point program for changing your own shitty town.

This is not a crime about thought," says the assistant US attorney. Then what is it?

Mahmud Faruq Brent, a 30-year-old DC taxi driver, is about to spend the next 15 years behind bars for "conspiring to support a terrorist organization." No one, not even prosecutors, believes that the Ohio-born Brent planned to attack the United States. Brent was convicted of supporting Lakshar-e-Taiba, an Islamist group in Pakistan, and of attending one of its training camps.

"This defendant took action and he offered himself to a terrorist organization," explains the prosecutor. But all the "action" took place in the would-be jihadi's brain. There was no terrorist act. There was no crime.

Based in Pakistan, Lakshar-e-Taiba has attacked India, which it seeks to drive out of Kashmir. It has also carried out terrorist acts in Pakistan as part of its campaign to oust the military junta of General Pervez Musharraf. It's easy to see why Musharraf is afraid of the group. One could understand why the US, as Musharraf's ally, might honor Pakistan's request to extradite one of its members. But Lakshar-e-Taiba has never attacked a target in the United States, the West—anywhere outside the Asian subcontinent. Why are American taxpayers footing the bill to lock this man up for 15 years?

Abdulrahman Farhane, a Brooklyn bookstore owner accused with Mahmud Brent of supporting the Pakistani group Lakshar-e-Taiba, received 13 years in federal prison. Two others charged in the case are awaiting sentencing.

As the government breaks up one alleged "plot" after another (Columbine-type massacre narrowly avoided as high school kid nabbed with "hit list" of fellow students! Crazy Muslim radicals caught with camera full of digital photos of tourist attractions!) it's easy to see that anyone—yes, even you—can get swept up by hysterical grand inquisitors wielding dubious legal logic as naïve journalists dutifully report the latest victory against imminent danger.

"The government is arresting individuals on terrorism charges based on what individuals have said or thought—not on actual, concrete plans," editorialized the *Daytona Beach News-Journal* about Hamid Hayat, one of countless Muslims nabbed after 9/11 for "providing material support or resources to terrorists." The feds "only proved that he did things that sometimes precede acts of terrorism. It was pre-emptive justice, but was also speculative justice."

Most people have indulged in theoretical discussions about how to rob a bank or even how to get away with murder. They obviously don't intend to carry out their "plots." Yet any of us could fall victim to the recent tendency to equate crimes of intent to crimes of action.

Jack McClellan, 45, is a self-described pedophile who runs a blog that advocates sex with children. "If you look at things he has posted, he clearly is a pedophile," says Lt. Thomas Sirkel of the Sheriff's Department in Los Angeles, where McClellan lives. As far as we know, however, he has never acted on it. His record is clean.

Local mothers are plotting—er, organizing—to "to push lawmakers in Sacramento to legislate Mr. McClellan out of business," reports *The New York Times*. "Just the idea that this person could get away with what he was doing and no one could press charges has made me angry," Jane Thompson of East Los Angeles told the paper. Of course, what really angers her is that he's getting away with what he's *thinking*.

I don't blame her. But McClellan hasn't *done* anything. Do we really want to live in a culture that penalizes violent and impure thoughts?

Thoughtcrime pours big bucks into CBS Television, broadcaster of the take-a-bath-after-viewing program *To Catch a Predator*. No one cares about entrapped suckers like the guy "in a SpongeBob SquarePants jacket, armed with a bottle of K-Y Jelly." Like dozens of other would-be pervs, the 21-year-old man thinks he's going to meet a 14-year-old girl for sex, only to find Dateline's Chris Hansen and a passel of cops waiting to arrest him.

Run your neighborhood through your state's Megan's Law database and you'll likely conclude that sex offenders are all over the place. One is too many, but the problem isn't as widespread as we've been led to believe. Many of the registrants are statutory rapists like the 17-year-old Georgia boy doing hard time for consensual sex with a 15-year-old girl.

"Anti-predator stings involving decoys may actually outnumber crimes involving real victims," reports *Rolling Stone*. *To Catch a Predator* claims there are 50,000 child molesters online. But "a study conducted by the University of New Hampshire estimated that there were fewer than 2900 arrests for online sexual offenses against minors in a single year. What's more, only 1152 involved victims who were approached by strangers on the Internet—and more than half this number were actually cops posing as kids."

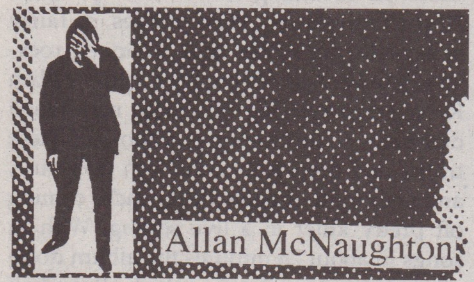
In other words, most men who fantasize about sex with children don't actually do it. Judeo-Christian tradition rewards those who deny temptation; we throw them in jail. Perverted Justice, the group that trolls chat rooms to set up stings for "To Catch a Predator," has a fitting name.

Ari Fleischer warned us to watch what we say. Now we'd better watch what we think.

BOOK: *Silk Road To Ruin: Is Central Asia*

The New Middle East? (NBM Publishing, 304 pp., price $22.95), is out now. You can get the book at any bookstore or comics shop; or on the Internet, or order a signed copy by mailing $30 to the above address (include your mailing address and how you'd like it signed).

Silk Road To Ruin is a comprehensive primer to the political powder keg of Central Asia—Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Xinjiang in Western China—that will soon make the current war in Iraq look like Dick Cheney's proverbial "cakewalk." It includes 100 pages of graphic novella accounts of my trips to the Stans, photos and maps of the region, and in-depth essays explaining everything from oil pipeline politics to buzkashi, the craziest and most dangerous sport currently played by the human race.



Let's get one thing out in the open before we even start, eh? Borders are lines on maps. They don't exist in the real world. They were drawn by men and have been redrawn and moved and expanded and they can be erased. We (I?) demand nothing less: no borders, no passports, no walls, no restrictions on movement, on freedoms. Anything less is compromise and capitulation. I resent being told I can go to this place but I can't go to that. Says who? You and whose army..? Oh...

There's the rub, guvnor. There are armies and policemen and informers and vigilantes who think they have a job to do or something to protect. A culture, a heritage, a race. There are forms to fill and queues to wait in and fees to be paid and then you're one of us. Children of immigrants clamor to insist that they are not racist. That they just want things done legally, the way their ancestors did. Their German, Irish, Polish, English, Scottish, Swedish ancestors. Their white ancestors.

Who'll work the fields? Who'll clean the hotels? Who'll peel the potatoes and stack the plates in the kitchen? Who'll clear the lawn of leaves and mind the children? This is a common argument one hears from proponents of increased immigration from the poor South. "Amnesty" the cry, "for my gardener, for my nanny, for my barista." Middle-class people of the United States of America (and aren't we all middle-class?) demand cheap goods, so American business demands cheap labor.

So the choices, the only two choices available. One: a wall to keep America safe, secure, and white (make no mistake on this point. It *is* about race). Two: a controlled and steady stream of documented, transient miniscule-wage workers with little hope of career advancement, education, or more permanent residence. Banishment, or slavery.

I am not ignorant. I understand that the conditions as they exist are unacceptable. Workers traveling "illegally" to the US in search of a "better" life expose themselves to arrest, deportation, exploitation, rape. The supposed "illegality" of their mere existence prevents them from demanding the rights they ought to expect as human beings. Take away the illegality and you take away some of the problems. Unfortunately the current situation even for legal low-wage workers in the US is lamentable. In particular, the minimum wage in many areas is nowhere near a living wage. So the threat of deportation might be taken away, but the exploitation is something the poor cannot escape, whether they have been determined to exist legally or not.

The debate rages on. It's sure to be an election-year trope. Where Does The Candidate Stand On The Immigration Question? Choice One or Choice Two? Who decided what the question was in the first place? What if one wished to pose a different question?

Abroad: workers from member countries are free to move within the European Union at will, working legally and paying their taxes. I can't say firsthand how well this system works because I have never personally taken advantage of it, but it seems to make sense on a practical level. This system did seem to render the borders between EU countries mere formalities for a while, although the war on terror may have put paid to that. In my limited experience, the main result has been a movement of young people from East to West, or, more specifically, a dramatic increase in Polish speakers working in the service industry in the UK. Are they taking jobs away from decent, hardworking Scottish school-leavers, or are they doing the dirty work spoiled Westerners won't do?

I have chosen to live in North America. The climate and atmosphere of California appeals to me. There's a feeling of openness and possibility. Where I come from, people walk around with misery masks on their rain-battered mugs, like a Halloween false-face that won't come off. I lifted a damp finger to the wind and followed the breeze westward. I live here legally but I'm not a citizen. I enjoy living here and want to stay, which means at some point I must apply for citizenship. Forms must be filled (a stack as thick as this magazine), fees must be paid (more than a week's wages—more than a month's if you're a minimum wage worker). There's a test of American history. A late-night talk show host poses questions from the citizenship test to American-born citizens of good standing. As expected, the true red-white-and-blue-blooded Americans get the answers wrong to much comic effect. Cut to the turban-wearing cab driver who answers all the questions correctly. Assimilating punk rockers must un-learn the histories of Zinn, Chomsky et al and memorize the "correct" answers, for fear of being branded a Red Under The Bed and thrown onto one of the grey busses with bars on the windows parked behind the Immigration and Naturalization Service fortress in downtown San Francisco. Finally, when the form is filled and the fee is paid and the test is passed, there's the pledge of allegiance. As one friend advised, you stand and pledge allegiance with your fingers crossed behind your back, and then later in the bar you drink tequila and toast "Viva Mexico!" In my case it will be a 12-year-old Glenfiddich and the toast will be No Gods, No Masters, and No Fucking Borders.

don't try
by dave

I've decided that it's time for me to leave the Bay Area. As great a place as it is, I've been living here my whole damn life and the need for a major change of scenery has finally won out over all the things that have kept me here for too long. In early October I'm calling it quits on the Bay and in the spirit of immigration, I'm heading north.

So what lucky place gets to receive me as a new resident alien? For now it's Olympia, Washington. It's a completely different, and smaller scene there then

what we have in the Oakland/San Francisco area, and that's exactly what I'm looking for. Plus, the dreary skies, tall trees, and damp grounds appeal to my uber-metal mentality. So, to the other eight metal guys and gals residing in the more widely known indie/punk enclave, I say, let's build a new scene and cross the triangle of flames.

What I'll miss about the Bay is all the great shows we get on a regular basis, even just from the locals, as we have one of the best scenes in the country. I'll miss many close friends and family as well. Things I won't miss include the traffic, dense population, high crime, general paranoia, bad memories, and assorted backstabbers and fakes (apologies for the semi-25 Ta Life-style reference, bitch).

As for Olympia, it's clear to me that they need a metal injection up there. Maybe running my label there will help with that. Hopefully I'll be able to convince more of the dark lord's bands to come to town. Instead of the International Pop Underground, we'll try to create the International Harsh Underground, or something. The point is, the Bay Area doesn't really need me the way Olympia so apparently does, you see? It's not just about me—I go where I'm needed.

And it's in Olympia that this month's album reviews begin. Perhaps the bleakest thing to ever emerge from the city's borders, Wolves In The Throne Room, has seen fit to bestow upon us their second full-length record in the form of *Two Hunters* for the Southern Lord label.

More fully produced and layered than the band's debut album, *Diadem of 12 Stars*, *Two Hunters* begins with an extended buzzing intro that recalls some of Burzum's more guitar/ambient moments run through a sort of post-rockish filter. The band espouses anti-modernism and a return to the ways of nature, and even without lyrics, the track musically conveys those ideas effectively.

Things really get going once the second track gets underway, as the Wolves kick things into black metal tempos and riff patterns. Clearly the band takes a large influence from some of their Norwegian forbears with early Emperor and Ulver coming particularly to mind. Songs tend to be of the more depressive, melancholy, and epic variety. Those looking for raw, necro blackness in the Darkthrone vein should look elsewhere.

Operatic and ethereal female vocals are incorporated in certain places, not in a way that detracts from the music (a mistake many metal bands end up making in an effort to be somehow "progressive" or "experimental") but not necessarily adding a great deal either—it just further affirms the album's bleak mood. Overall, a strong second effort from another unique west coast metal band, and I look very forward to seeing what they do next time around.

Also coming from the Pacific Northwest—Portland to be exact—is Oakhelm, a band comprised of members of Fall of the Bastards and Wormwood among others. And once again, we have a record firmly rooted in some European metal subgenres but with enough to make it stand out from all the usual clichés that bands of this ilk fall prey to.

On the debut album, *Betwixt & Between*, Oakhelm deals in a Viking metal style that incorporates elements of black metal and death metal, with riffs that could often be played either acoustically or in metallized form. "Of Wood & Blood" starts the proceedings with great, epic riffing straight from the mead hall, an effective memorable chorus, and enough speed and vocal venom for those into more aggressive stuff.

It's followed by the acoustic, female-vocal "Skal Shanty" and then "As The Murder Flies," a track that brings to mind a band that trolled these landscapes years ago by the name of Mithotyn. Vocalist/bassist Pete Jay (also drums in Wormwood) has several alternating singing/screeching styles to compliment the different moods, tempos, and arrangements. "Maybon Shore" is an acoustic downer complete with rain samples and great Viking-folk melodies recalling again Ulver's acoustic forays on the amazing *Kveldssanger* LP.

Betwixt & Between is especially recommended to fans of Fall of the Bastards. While not sounding in any way identical to that now defunct band, some of the influence in riffs and drum patterns is there and anyone into the Fall of the Bastards stuff will undoubtedly find a lot to like here. On a label called Forest Moon Special Products.

The Divine Tragedy, an album by Avichi, a band previously unknown to me, made its way to me courtesy of NMB Records of Dekalb, Illinois. This is totally premium black metal done in similar style to the stuff being released these days by Ajna except this is better and more effective. Strangely enough, this was recorded at Steve Albini's studio, though was not recorded by the man himself.

Still, this album has a great, dark production value up there with the big boys of the scene like Deathspell Omega, Watain and Glorior Belli. Titles like "Messianic Deliverance," "Purification Within The Eighth Sphere," and "Taedium Vitae" give you some sense of what you're dealing with here. The tempo is generally just below blastbeat speed, but with plenty of changes and riff variation to keep things interesting for the more seasoned black metal veteran. Whether or not Avichi will garner respect remains to be seen but this album stands as one of the best in the current crop of American and Euro black metal.

A band I didn't really want to listen to because of their name, The Fucking Wrath, ponys up with *Season of Evil*, an album described by their label, Goodfellow, as a cross between Tragedy, Sabbath and *Kill Em All*-era Metallica. So I figured I'd check it out, since I like all that stuff. "To the Eels" starts off sounding like a more polished Anti-Cimex tune, then makes a fairly believable transition into a stoner rock-style jam before heading back into Swedish Kang territory. The influences mentioned definitely shine through on most of these tracks and are given a modern polishing, and one could imagine these tracks coming off pretty killer in a live setting. With 11 songs in about 26 minutes the album doesn't overstay its welcome, which after a half hour probably would have worn thin. Ultimately not something I'll be listening to repeatedly, but a lot of you will find something to like here.

That's about all the new music I managed to get through this month that was actually worth writing about. However, there are still a few things to discuss.

A new issue of *Oakenthrone* zine has been released. *Oakenthrone* is easily the best metal zine in existence right now. Not a glossy-style rag at all, this is printed in a very classy style with a black and metallic silver cover, and good quality paper inside at the size of a 7-inch. Printed by 1984 Printing in Oakland. Issue #5 has it all, people. Sure, it takes them the better part of a year to get these done, but what you get is 84 pages of top-notch metal writing, illustrations done exclusively for the zine and amazing graphic design work by magazine co-principal Ben West. This new issue features extended interviews with Asunder, Archgoat, Coffins, Moss, Portal, Caina and Cult of Daath among several others. The album reviews are extensive and well-written. This issue also comes with a compilation CD that features all of the bands interviewed including an exclusive KFJC radio recording from Asunder.

The magazine doesn't sell copies direct, but many underground metal distros are carrying this as well as some in-the-know stores, so just search online and you'll find it. You won't be disappointed.

Now, since we still have some time and space left to deal with here, and no new worthy stuff, let's revisit a few overlooked classics from the vault that you may not be aware of.

First up is Deathwitch from Sweden. Deathwitch began in the 90s and released a string of amazing gnarly Swedish death metal records on the Necropolis label. Band main man Nicke Terror has also been involved with Runemagick, The Funeral Orchestra, and Sacramentum among others—all totally awesome in their own right. After the Necropolis label took a shit on the band, like they did to all their bands, Deathwitch split for a time. Nicke concentrated on other shit, but eventually came back to do our album of choice today: *Violence, Blasphemy, Sodomy*, the last in a string of cleverly-metal titled albums like *Deathfuck Rituals, The Ultimate Death* and *Monumental Mutilations*.

The style here is ultimately based in Swedeath, but there are occasional flourishes of thrashy black metal in a South American vein. Nihilistic metal mayhem ensues on opener "Flamethrower Carnival" and follows with the amazingly necro-raw "Total Morbid" which features the brilliant lyrical nugget, *"I don't give a fuck, fuck you fuckin' retards, I hate you, I hate everything… call me Total Morbid."* Songs like "Necrosodomizer," "Coffin Fornicator," and "Death Maniac" at varying times recall names like Nifelheim, Repugnant, early Entombed, Sodom, and Autopsy. Surprisingly enough, this was released by Earache, a deviation from the usual horribleness they've released this century. Not surprisingly, the band went permanently AWOL soon after. Look for this—or any of the other Deathwitch albums mentioned—immediately.

Another somewhat overlooked masterpiece is the first album by Sweden's Bewitched, *Diabolical Desecration*—really their only truly worthwhile record. Bewitched originally started as a side project of members of Ancient Wisdom and Katatonia (specifically Anders "Blackheim" Nystrom) as a project to just fuck around and play some killer old-school euro thrash and metal riffs. After this record hit and they did a small amount of touring, they found themselves at the forefront of a brief revival movement termed "retro-thrash" at the time. Having no idea that the band would gain the amount of popularity it did, Blackheim quit, as Katatonia was always his main band. Once he left, the band continued to release albums, but never as good as the debut.

It starts off with "Hard As Steel (Hot As Hell)" a black thrasher that cops a riff straight from Mercyful Fate's "Curse of the Pharaohs" altering it only just slightly to meet their needs. Tracks like "Hellcult" and "Triumph of Evil" don't hide their obvious appreciation of Venom and you can hear references to bands like Judas Priest, Accept, Bathory, and Slayer throughout, in some cases the riffs sounding eerily similar. Vocally it's a trade off between Blackheim and Vargher with not a lot of difference between the two—a pretty standard angry black thrash rasp.

Although a lot of metalheads might see this album as somewhat standard, for me it hit at the right time and place, and along with Aura Noir's "Black Thrash Attack" stands as one of the great "retro-thrash" records of the mid to late 90s that copiously copped the riffs of the ancient ones. Released by Osmose.

So that's it for this time brethren and sisters of my circle. I'll still be in the Bay Area for a few more months, but then I'm headed North By Northwest. For now, the same old contact info still applies: Don't Try, 2340 Powell Street, #117, Emeryville, CA 94608 USA. donttry@20buckspin.com

Monday, August 6, 2007.
Leipzig, Germany

Das leben ist kein ponyhof.

Two and a half weeks at Zoro.

The time has flown by, a mad rush of days filled with people and conversations, greeting early mornings with our beers and music, not wanting to go home just yet. Just as I am feeling more at home, getting attached to the people and the place, it is already time to leave again. This is both the beauty and tragedy of my video tour. I jump into people's lives and projects, meet amazing people, delve into what happens here, become involved, and then I am off again.

I left San Francisco on April 20, making my time traveling about three and a half months now. My head spins a bit when I think of the last 95 days or so. I greeted the spring in Boston, Montreal, and New York, and started the European part of my trip in the beginning of June, marching along with so many other people at Rostock protesting the G8. From there it was a long weekend of music at the Scum Festival in London, then meeting the Subhumans for part of their tour through Belgium and France. In Dijon, I stayed at Les Tanneries for two weeks, working on a video about their recent struggle to keep the place after threat of eviction. Then I took the train down south to Barcelona, spending two weeks with the punks from Otan and Invasion, learning about the squatting situation and Barcelona history, staying at the Aprestora squat and making my way eventually to a squatted farm in the mountains outside the city, watching as a group of people came together to bake bread in an old brick oven, the hills and valleys background to our conversations about creating the lives we want to lead.

From Barcelona it was back to Germany, a quick hello to the Bremen gang, enjoying the good cheer at Punk Cafe and catching a show at the Friesen.

Now, back in the moment, here at Zoro, I've been working on a video documentary about this autonomous space that has been putting on punk gigs and other DIY music since 1991. I have spent hours talking to people about this project and their lives, trying to unravel how things are organized here, the history of Zoro, how Germany's reunification and the city's desire for "law and order" began to shut down all the squats in the early 90s, how projects in Liepzig for the most part have either disappeared or become legalized, and how people working together have managed to keep Zoro and other collective houses alive over the years.

Even after a dozen interviews on tape and many more conversations in the street outside the concerts, at the bar, in people's houses, at Lazy Dog and at Zoro, it is still hard to easily explain it all. For one thing, the concerts, while the most visible and better-known part of Zoro, are only one part of this project. There is also a weekly people's kitchen, a large youth center, a bike repair shop, a coffee bar and a printing workshop.

There are also several projects that sur-

round Zoro, and are connected by both the property association that now owns the land and the people involved. In the front house by the street there is Zest, a vegetarian restaurant (that makes an amazing soya steak, my gawd), an independent bookbinding and print shop, and in the floors above there are apartments where about 14 people pay cheap rent, neighbors are friends and there is no landlord, only the association working together to pay the bills. There is also a middle house where another six or so people live and pay low rent and there is the office for the association. Behind Zoro there are metal workshops, and next to the yard there is a small backyard with a vegetable and flower garden.

Needless to say, it is an inspiring and interesting place to be.

I have been busy during my time here, and even now I need to go soon, as I will meet Katja at an interview this afternoon. I want to write more about Zoro and Leipzig, but due to lack of time and an available computer, this column by necessity will be cut short.

I leave you with a vision of my favorite time here, watching the sunrise from a roof in Connewitz. Looking down at the solid walls of apartment buildings over a hundred years old, five or six stories tall, very formal and rigid, leading to the skyline dominated by an old smokestack, and the new buildings of downtown in the distance.

Marcel and I sat on the roof's ledge looking down at the street below, the electric train picking up passengers as the day began. We rolled cigarettes and talked about life and the neighborhood and how things change. Some things are very unique here, but I notice a pattern that I have seen repeated now in so many different places, from my personal experiences in Boston in the late 90s to what I witnessed in Barcelona this summer.

There are bulldozers, and newly empty lots where squats and people's homes and places for shows once stood. Small independent shops are slowly replaced by large chain stores, apartment buildings are renovated and property becomes more expensive. Students and yuppies are attracted by a hip neighborhood and begin to move in, replacing the working families, artists, activists and punks who gave the neighborhood character and culture. It is depressing, this time of expanding capitalism. But what I have also seen everywhere I go are people who don't give up, who keep putting their heart and energy into projects and spaces that are outside the profit-driven system, who give life to old buildings, creating community, art and music, supporting networks of solidarity and resistance, and helping to build another way of life.

The sun slowly rises and the clouds turn from grey to white, and we can see for miles. On the roof there is an enormous homemade antenna made from metal pipes and mesh, aimed towards the west. It is an artifact of the GDR, a way to catch television programs from the other side of the wall. Now, the same pipes are covered with a group of homemade connections for the internet, catching free wireless, the next generation of information.

As Marcel and I talk of life and neighborhoods, my cigarette papers fall out of my hands, landing on the window ledge below our feet. A single paper catches on the wind and flies away into the open air, taking flight over the city, a white flutter against the blue sky and brick buildings below. The sun is now blazing in the east, and a flock of sparrows fly from one building to another. I am tired but content, my traveling luck with me, having found yet another special connection in this world.

The paper disappears into the distance, and another day begins.

Thanks and hello to everyone at Zoro: Alex, Manja, Stephie and Julie for helping me get the video project going and all their help, Thomas for showing me a Liepzig bar flight and the many hours at the Lazy Dog, Betty for welcoming me to the front house and Sebastian for letting me stay at his place, Jay, Tala, Nicole and John always being loads of fun to hang out with, Ross for coffee-making sessions in the kitchen and the amazing vegan sweet rolls, Scaba for making the best damn vegan cheesecake on the planet (topped with vanilla banana chocolate ice cream), Frank for showing me the G18 and G17 projects, Marcel for being one of the sweetest and warmest people I've ever met, Leister for hanging around the bike shop smoking cigarettes out the window, Al for inviting me to coffee when I didn't know anyone, and of course all the folks I interviewed about their thoughts on Zoro.

Many cheers to you all, and I raise my beer once again, a toast to life and friends, and the connections between us, Love and Solidarity, Erika Ransom

So I'm on the phone with my brother Luke's baby-sitter.

Kid-watcher.

Little person-attendee.

Overseer of those age-challenged.

Whatever the politically correct term happens to be in California that week.

See, my brother lives in Silicon Valley (no, not Los Angeles, that is the other Silicon Valley, where they use the stuff for better purposes), and he is one of those computer guys. You know. He designs programs and talks in slashes and brackets and other stuff I have no clue about.

Anyway, he and his "wyfe" recently hired someone to watch my niece and nephew, and somehow I managed to get her on the phone because it was their "night out alone." They had gone to some movie. No doubt about some women's rights stuff or how America is destroying the world.

My brother and his "wyfe" are into that.

They like to recycle, and save our Mother Earth, which I don't argue with. Meanwhile, their fucking lawn has more shit on it than the stage of any GG Allin show I have ever seen. And they have ants crawling all over their house. And I'm sure my brother's truck does nice things to the ozone. But it is OK. He lives in California and that is what he is supposed to do. That's what they all do out there.

Besides, I love him. He's my brother.

So I get the sitter on the phone.

"Hello," she says, in a kinda hippie/harried voice.

I can smell her through the receiver.

"April?" I say, expecting my brother's "wife."

"No, this is Tracy—who is this?" says the voice.

I explain to her and her odor that it is Luke's brother, George, in New York. She asks me if I am the same brother who interviewed that Black Flag guy. I tell her no, that was Luke's other brother, Sam, who talks like a human being.

She says, "really?"

I tell her no.

We get to talking about stuff and she tells me that she used to be into punk rock, but grew out of it. I ask her what she is into

now, and she says The Dead.

"It figures," I tell her. I know a lot of punks who went deadhead. Especially the ones that moved to that place.

California.

"The Dead are dead and suck," I tell Tracy, as I hear my year-old niece in the background, crying, and my nephew telling her to shut up so he can watch the Power Rangers.

This was a while ago.

"They don't suck. Punk sucks. When are you gonna grow out of that? Get into some Jerry?" she asks.

"Jerry's dead," I tell her, wondering if she has heard the news yet. Those people are kinda slow.

"So is punk," she comes back with.

And she is kinda right, on a lot of levels. Punk is kinda dead. And if it is not, this crazy show in England that was going on at that time should kill it. Real good.

They were calling this show, errr, festival, "Holidays In The Sun," and were billing it as "A celebration of 20 years of punk."

Funny. Now it's 30 years.

How time flies.

Anyway, all these old bands were getting back together, and playing this at the Blackpool Winter Gardens, in England somewhere. It cost like 49 pounds for all three days. I wonder how much that is in dog years.

Or better yet, I wonder what the teeth count was.

Anyway, some of the acts that played were such dinosaurs as X-Ray Spex, 999, Buzzcocks, UK Subs, Sham 69, The Damned, Chron Gen, Anti Pasti, Eater, Anti-Nowhere League, The Lurkers, Chelsea, Vibrators, Slaughter & the Dogs, Peter and the Test Tube Babies, and basically, you name some old English punk band, and they were playing there.

It was fucking nuts.

Almost all these bands who hadn't been together for over two decades and now were cashing in on Greenday and Rancid. Geezus. It's fucking Jurassic Punk.

And that's what the festival should have been called. Jurassic Punk.

They shoulda had a big skeleton head with a mohawk, and the "Jurassic Park" lettering underneath it. Only using the word punk.

They shoulda made the place a big ride. You know, ya get in some tour cars like they got at Disney World or Universal, and they point out the sights.

"Over to our left we see Polly Styrene, the singer of X-Ray Spex," the Barbie doll tour guide would say, with her cute little voice and silicon boobies she purchased in LA.

"Polly disappeared many years ago, to join the Hare Krishnas. She got tired of eating vegetables and dating bald men in sheets with ponytails. So here she is."

Then Ms. Styrene would wave to the crowd, all the while thinking to herself that she just wasted twenty years worrying about the fate of cows, when she could have been raking in all this cash.

As the tour continues, more old punk dinosaurs would be pointed out. "To our right, we see Nick Cash, from 999, in his natural surroundings." Nick used to like to eat a lot, and kinda had a weight problem. They would probably have him in a McDonalds or a Burger King, or whatever the equivalent is in England. "The Mad Cow" or whatever.

"And directly ahead, we see all the members of Peter and the Test Tube Babies. This is their nursing home. That's not Jack Daniel's they are drinking—it's Geritol."

The tour would wind on and on, and every once in a while some old punk would attack the tour car, "just to be punk," and all the tourists would scream. I could just see Jimmy Percy from Sham 69 throwing rocks at the car, yelling, "Make no mistake!" Or the guys in the Buzzcocks attacking the car, yelling that the pop band of the week stole their look and sound, while they were really the closest rip off of the early Beatles, ever.

I could see the UK Subs, Anti-Nowhere League, and The Damned all holding up signs saying that they never left punk—punk left them.

I could see The Vibrators standing there, smiling, as the tour guide tries to say their name without giggling. All in all, it'd be a fun ride.

After the ride part, then you'd see the concert. I don't have to see it to tell you what it would be like. There would be countless wheelchairs parked on the side of the stage, and you would be able to buy Metamucil at all the concession stands. There would be plenty of all-access restrooms, and the sets would last about fifteen minutes. Then the bands would get tired and want to go back to their hotels and play that silly game where they knock some heavy thing around on a slippery floor. Either that, or take their naps.

Between acts, announcements will be made about new products for old punks that the audience can purchase. Among them, glue-on mohawks, "safe" studded dog collars and bracelets, and leather dentures. Wait! I think Hot Topic already has that stuff! Punk rock.

"You are right," I tell Tracy, the hippie in current charge of the lives of my niece and nephew. "Punk is dead. Well, that punk, anyway. The punk you remember. It's fine for nostalgia, but for rebellion? No way."

She asks me what the hell I am talking about. But she doesn't say "hell." They don't use that word in California.

"There is a new form of punk. There always is. Every couple of years or so," I explain to her. "There is always turmoil, always political problems, always an oppressive establishment, and therefore, always a need for a revolution."

She doesn't say anything.

"The bands today sound different, well, most of them, and what they are saying is very important to their generation. There is always a need for it, and therefore, it will always exist."

Then I listen to myself. I'm talking about revolutions, political problems, and the establishment. The Establishment. Geez. It is me who sounds like the hippie.

"George," says Tracy, "you should get into the Dead."

For a second I think about it.

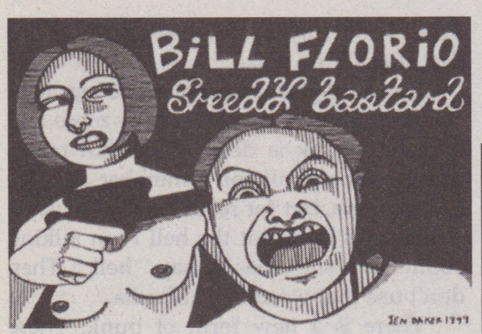
I could fucking give up trying to change the world, making it a better place for everyone, making things fair, and caring about my fellow man. I could just wear rags, take drugs, and spin around in circles.

"Naw," I tell her, "I'm punk rock. Now get your tie-dyed ass off the phone and let me talk to my nephew."

Take My Life, Please.

Endnotes:

1. www.georgetabb.com
2. Talk about revolution—believe it or not, the new Ministry album, *The Last Sucker* is so angry and pissed at The Bush Administration it rocks. And I never liked Ministry until now.
3. For the PlayStation Portable, "Alien Syndrome" is not a bad game. Too RPG for me, but others I know love it! And "The Darkness" for the Xbox 360 is so fucking punk rock I can't believe it. You play as this mafia dude, back from the dead, who has satanic powers. There is great music throughout the game, and everything looks so real. The detail in the New York Subways is so fine, I can smell the piss, vomit, poop, and squatters. Wait! That's the same thing!
4. Nervous Brickdown for the Nintendo DS is addictive, fun, and cute. Good for you and your hippie family. Now go cut your hair. And for God's sake, take a bath!



My friend Carla complained about the record reviews sections of MRR and *Razorcake* having too many reviews of old records being re-released. My answer was, "Well if you're 15 and your best link to new releases is one of these zines and you're not familiar with some band from say, 1991, wouldn't a review explaining why this record was re-released make sense?" I mean, one use of putting a zine out for 25 years is to document what is really going on. If you read other zines, you really are bombarded by nothing but rewritten press releases, which never document anything. I wasn't going to talk about this exactly, but I figured it was related, so there you have it. Paragraph one.

I was going to explain the many obstacles for a kid getting into punk nowadays and some of the reasons they don't stay into it very long. If you put on that satellite radio punk station you'll quickly notice that almost every good song they play came out before 1990 and that every horrible song they play came out after 2000 or so. There are a lot of reasons for this. I was thinking that the kids in punk bands in the early 80s must've had better records to listen to when they were little kids. But no; actually, one could argue that disco and prog rock is far worse than the redundant wishy-washy pop of the past 20 years. But then I was thinking, hey what was in a dollar bin in 1978? Late 60s stuff. Really mediocre records of the 60s by bands that didn't quit in time. What's in a dollar bin nowadays? Really horrible records of bands from the 80s and 90s and that didn't quit in time. But all in all, is *The Further Adventures of Charles Westover* by DEL SHANNNON worse than say, *I and I Survived* by BAD BRAINS? It really can't be.

It's bad enough that there are so many bands that should have broken up and done something new 20 years ago, but what's worse is that they keep releasing new records—and those new records seem to be the ones that new kids just getting into punk end up with because they're marked down and totally everywhere. When I was a kid, someone told me that the DICKIES and TSOL were amazing bands. Guess what records I bought? *Second Coming* and *Hit and Run*.

Same goes for the internet. On punknews.org, the main stories are about bands that are not punk (hey, I'm not being judge of what's punk here—I looked up these bands' Myspace pages and they all say metal or indie or whatnot). THE GOOD LIFE, DILLINGER ESCAPE PLAN, THROWDOWN, THE GREAT DECEIVER, ZIMMER'S HOLE, THE SLEEPING. Towards the bottom they mention BAD BRAINS (which is probably more insulting to the other bands on the list) and somehow PAINT IT BLACK (I suppose they have a good PR person.) This is more pathetic than the punk-sectioned dollar bin. At least the dollar bin contains bands that used to be punk—these bands have probably never made such a claim.

So if punk is a dirty word to a website called punknews, what does this mean for someone trying to weed through horribly written press release-based slick magazines, dollar bins, and loudmouth kids with AFI t-shirts telling our poor 15-year-old which records to buy? You fold this into an extra ten years of our shit-brownie-batter of large bands vs. small band tours and you can see why so many bands playing, say, "Punk Nite" at some club are so ridiculously horrible.

I think reunion shows are fun, in a sadistic sort of way. But it seems like all these bands that weren't any good ten or fifteen years ago have been doing that one reunion show and it's developed into seven reunion shows every year. It's no doubt a few more dollar-bin CDs are in the works right this minute. Hey folks—unless that band from 1993 was totally amazing and didn't play anything off that horrible fourth LP, make sure you don't go to the second reunion show. It's bad enough the good bands that happen to be around are being neglected; we don't need to see 108 one more time, ever again.

Lastly, I'm gonna let you hear from the best example of all of someone who should have packed up their guitar in 1993. Ben Weasel. To summarize the context of this email he sent me, I spent a couple of months jokingly threatening to throw doughnuts at him on his big return to the live stage last month. After trying to play it cool and just sending out emails trying to get some background on me, he finally broke down and asked me why I was gonna throw doughnuts at him. I explained how, for the most part, why I thought this was funny—the main reason being that he's had a history of totally losing his shit when someone throws food at him and of being very neurotic about playing shows in general, so I figured I'd take advantage of both of these dents in his personality at once. There wasn't really any malice involved, I just have this idea that Ben isn't any fun and I wanted this to be proven or disproven with funny results either way. Anyhow, I assured him I wouldn't actually be throwing any food and if he wanted to do something funny with him on board ala Jerry Lawler and Andy Kaufman, I'd be happy to plan something with him. I gave him my phone number and offered to buy him lunch when I was in Madison, Wisconsin. Never heard from him until this message, a week after the show, after I was kicked out for pinning doughnut-emblazoned armbands on people three hours before he was to go on. Got this message when I told him I'd be happy to show him my column before I sent it into MRR.

Bill,

the only column of yours I've ever read outside of the Anne R. Key ones was one involving Against Me that I read on your Donut Myspace site (I assume it's the one you're referring to). I have no idea what you mean by people getting phone calls. I haven't read MRR in 10 years, I'm not going to call and complain to them if you make up more stories about me. I'm shocked that anybody still reads that magazine but in any case I imagine its readers are almost exclusively the type who aren't exactly fans of mine in the first place. Just spell my name right.

For what it's worth, I didn't have you thrown out. I know you have your story to tell, but I didn't. I'm pretty sure you know it too but in case you don't, there it is.

You should've said hello. You also should've spent less time scurrying around acting all weird and furtive and more time watching the bands and hanging out. It was a hell of a show. My skit was apparently somewhat of a flop - your presence was missed. Next time you want to play Kaufman/Lawler, hold up your end of the deal old man.

Ben

Ben chose to not only lock himself up in an upstairs backstage area of the club, he also didn't allow any of the other bands to go up there without his approval. My friend Artie told me he's booked dozens of bands that draw hundreds of people, and was never asked to place security at the

backstage area. Perhaps if Ben was actually sticking around to have fun and not think of everything as protecting his business interests, he'd be able to write one good song. Also, considering that no one would have ever listened to Screeching Weasel if Ben didn't write a column in MRR all those years ago, you'd think he'd at least try to put an air of decent dude when I offered to show him the column first for his comment. He put this air on when a friend of mine called him to interview him for Alternative Press, even after the second half of it ended up being about doughnuts. But hey, I have to give the guy credit—his new LP is only available for digital download. I credit Ben with his last true punk rock gesture, trying to put future dollar-bin records in a new more respectful place. The oblivion of that iPod that fell in a toilet.

For 20 pages of seeing people comment on how Ben Weasel is God, go to http://bored.knockknockrecords.com
Or just write me a love note.
bill@candids.com

For this special immigration issue, I'm going to leave the in-depth political and sociological studies to the other columns and articles. I'm just going to offer my own observations of what I've observed or encountered. It's more of a reaction to the ugly sentiments that get expressed. Some of these passages come from recent writings, some are new thoughts and I'm kind of pulling them together to offer a personalized take on this complex, lightning-rod issue. So without further ado…

"WHAT PART OF 'ILLEGAL' DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND?"

I wrote about this topic twice in 2006. The first was for the January column, which started with the salutation *"Illegal Y Que?"* ("Illegal, so what?"). I wrote about taking issue with the term "illegal alien," "illegal immigrants," or the shortened "illegals," the last of which I just this past week on graphics on Fox News (where else?) at the gym. About how, in Massachusetts, there was a debate over allowing children of undocumented immigrants to get in-state tuition rates from state colleges. The Republican gubernatorial candidate, Kerry Healy, opposed that, of course. And she got her ass handed to her in the November election by Deval Patrick. Not solely because of that, but she ran a generally vicious, borderline racist campaign and it didn't work.

I also touched on the immigration issue in my June '06 column. I mentioned the "Day Without Immigrants" protest that was held on the first of May last year, and I noted comments by a right-wing local sports host, Gerry Callahan. A sports media column by John Molori quoted Callahan as saying *"that Latino immigrants 'come to our country,' 'break our laws' and collect 'food stamps.' During that same show, Callahan referred to the May 1st Latino protest as a 'godless Commie day' and said that Communists are 'in bed with illegal aliens.'"* He also that Rosie O'Donnell appealed to the "big fat lesbian crowd." Incidentally, Callahan's voice gave out on him earlier this year and he needed throat surgery. He's been off the air for the past few months, but unfortunately will soon be returning to once again spew his venom. Karma? Hmmm…

"What part of illegal don't you understand?" That's the line that people use when others try to defend undocumented immigrants. I guess, from a strictly legal stance, it's hard to rebut. My thought is, even though they're in the country illegally, it's more of a moral issue—a human issue—and that sometimes trumps legality. That may seem naïve, but it's my response when I hear that kind of statement. It's the tone, it's where it's coming from. I'm not saying every person speaking out against "illegal" immigration is a racist, but many people take advantage of the issue to openly express those kinds of sentiments.

There's a woman from Marblehead, MA named Barbara Anderson. She made her bones with Citizens For Limited Taxation, a tax-cutting group (obviously) who got Proposition 2 ? passed in Massachusetts in 1980. It puts a limit on property taxes, essentially, and if a city or town wants extra funds for schools, fire, police, etc., they have to put an override on the ballot so people can vote for or against the extra tax. Anderson is one of those people who probably wouldn't pay *any* taxes if she could get away with it. Her views on other issues have become increasingly sketchy over the years, or maybe I just didn't pay attention to her earlier. Truth be told, I'd rather not now. She wrote about the May Day protests in her *Salem News* column: *"May Day, with its traditional protests, reminded me that more Americans were killed last year by illegal immigrants—committing crimes, driving drunk—than have died in Iraq."* That story's been spreading around the right-wing blogosphere since that report was published by an organization called "Family Security Matters" earlier this year, and Anderson dutifully reported it.

Anderson recently wrote a column on the conservative Capitol Hill Coffee House site about Michael Savage, a talk show host whose views are beyond retrograde. Want an example? There was recently a hunger strike in San Francisco organized by five students and, according to the liberal site MediaMatters.org, the students organized it *"to show their support for the DREAM Act, a provision of the 2007 Comprehensive Immigration bill (S.1639). The DREAM (or Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors) Act would provide a pathway to citizenship and other benefits for certain illegal immigrants who entered the United States before the age of 16 if they graduate from high school and enroll in either college or the military. In discussing the students, Savage stated: "I would say, let them fast until they starve to death then that solves the problem. Because then we won't have a problem about giving them green cards because they're illegal aliens, they don't belong here to begin with"… Savage went on to play a news report on the hunger strike, which said that engineering students are waiting for the DREAM Act to be passed so that they can enter the workforce. Following the clip, Savage responded: "We don't need you as engineers, go back to where you came from. … Go be an engineer there. You stole the education from us; now give it back to your home country. Go make a bomb where you came from."*

Anderson wrote about Savage's comments in that column. Her point was to defend his right to say that. It's true he has this right. But she seems almost laudatory about the tone of his show. He's made bigoted comments about Keith Ellison, a congressman from Minnesota who is Muslim: *"Keith Ellison won't swear to uphold the oath of office on the Bible, but on the Quran instead. This is unbelievable to me. So what's next? A witch gets elected, and she says she's gonna only be sworn in with her hand over a pentagram?"* Anderson had this to say about Savage's attitudes towards religion: *"He is always courteous and respectful of most religions."* Huh?

There's a guy in Peabody, where I live, named Johnny Mallia. He posted a series of signs in front of his home, attached to a telephone pole. The themes generally expressed themes of gung-ho patriotism, supporting the troops, speaking English,

and stopping illegal immigration. A typical sign said, top to bottom, "God Bless The USA, Support Our Troops, Speak English or Beat It, I Love My Country." I should note that the letter "S" is presented in the same style as the "SS" insignia used by the Nazis (and the band Kiss, but we'll leave that aside for now). One of the last signs had, at the bottom, the "SS" followed by the guy's name. "SS" wasn't part of a word and I'd say that's a giveaway. One sign said, "Webster's defines illegal contrary to the law. Question: define illegal immigrant." Once again, it's "what part of illegal don't you understand?" It's the combination of themes in those signs that paint a jingoistic, xenophobic picture.

I've posted pictures of those signs and written about them on my MySpace blogs and there's a place for people to leave comments. One guy, Kevin, is from my hometown but moved to North Carolina (and, since then, Florida) some years back. I didn't know him growing up, but he "friended" me since we were from the same place. We bonded over our Red Sox fandom but he seems to take issue with some of my political commentary. He considers TV/radio talk host Bill O'Reilly one of his heroes and has a black and white (no pun intended) attitude towards undocumented immigrants. Besides the immigration issue, I pondered whether those "speak English" types were giving a pass to Daisuke Matsuzaka, the Red Sox pitcher who conducts his interviews in Japanese. This is what he posted, spelling errors and all: *"Ahhhhhhhhhhh… Another shot at my boy Bill O'Reilly... That's just not right..!! For your info the Japanese pitchers are learning English..... Are they illegal aliens??? News Flash: Another drunken Mexican with a long record and deportion* [sic] *hits and kills yet another person in a DUI hit and run.....Happening toooo frequently around here since Charlotte was a safe haven for quite some time with liberal license laws… Illegal IS Illegal"*

I mean, how do you respond to something like that? I can act all high and mighty and say that no human being is "illegal." I could even say about how everyone in this country, with the exception of the Native Americans, is an illegal alien. As I said earlier, it's a humanitarian issue to me. When I see stories about immigration "raids" and read about people being treated in a dehumanizing fashion, it gets to me. There was such a raid at a factory in New Bedford, MA in March and some of those detained were quickly shipped to detention facilities in Texas. Mothers separated from their children.

When I read the type of invective used by people like Kevin, it also gets to me. In another email, he wrote about where he lived in Charlotte: *"When I first moved here I lived in a complex that was 2nd to none... Pool parties cuties everywhere... Just like heaven (cure)...Then [the] cuties on roller blades were slowly replaced by hispanics pushing baby carriages...Crime skyrocketed... 20 people living in a single apartment...People moved out in droves.. The place is without a doubt a scummy barrio…"* I mean, maybe what he says is true—perhaps crime went up. But I don't like the tone of how he states it.

Robert Putnam, who wrote the book *Bowling Alone,* which deals with a breakdown in civic engagement, has just concluded a study on diversity. He found, according to a piece in the *Boston Globe, "that more diverse communities tended to be larger, have greater income ranges, higher crime rates, and more mobility among their residents—all factors that could depress social capital independent of any impact ethnic diversity might have."* He also found that *"the greater the diversity in a community, the fewer people vote and the less they volunteer, the less they give to charity and work on community projects. In the most diverse communities, neighbors trust one another about half as much as they do in the most homogenous settings."* Putnam is a liberal and seemed disturbed by those findings, especially since it's been lauded by right-wing writers and think tanks. In the story, Putnam *"says he's also received hundreds of complimentary emails laced with bigoted language. "It certainly is not pleasant when David Duke's website hails me as the guy who found out racism is good."* Unfortunately, those findings echo what Kevin wrote to me.

One final anecdote. I read and post on a message board concerning Boston radio, and there are several posters who express blatantly racist and xenophobic opinions. Discussions of pirate radio pop up from time to time and some support it—like me, since my radio show started on a station that was quasi-pirate from time to time when we boosted our wattage. Others think they should be taken off the air and prosecuted. Many of these "pirates" are Haitian. One guy who is a GM at a Lynn AM station thinks that some of these stations may be operated by illegal immigrants. He said the FCC should investigate it and, also, *"Drop a dime to Immigration while they're at it."* It had the whiff of racism, and his scorn for "illegal" immigrants had surfaced before. On another thread, he wrote, *"If they are, indeed, illegal immigrants, their voices should not be heard, and their opnions* [sic] *count for zero."*

I never want to be like these people. I don't want to fit in with them nor have much to do with them, if it's possible. That's what drew me to punk—well, besides the music—it became a place to express my feelings of defiance, of alienation, of not wanting to accept those kinds of prejudices. Standing apart from that world. As I've said countless time, the punk scene has its own baggage, its own problems—but I still feel a connection with it.

When I worked in a record store, we got a faux-zine from Warner Bros called *Dirt.* The one thing in it worth reading was a comic strip called "The Retail Adventures Of Kalli & Rex." It detailed the true-life adventures of couple of guys working at a record store and was drawn by one of those guys, Karl Heitmueller. It ran from the late 80s to mid 90s. I have a book that collects the strips. There was one in the early 90s dealing with a kid who comes in and asks if they had any Skrewdriver. Kalli scolds the kid, telling him "they're just a pack of stupid racists," and the kid, leaving, says, "Yeah, I know." After he leaves, Kalli and Rex lament the state of the world—worsening race relations, the first Gulf War, all the yellow ribbons (a guy outside is showing wearing a flag/yellow ribbon shirt that says "Just Try To Burn This, Commie!"). Sound familiar? In the last two panels, Rex tells Kalli the record is over and asks what he wants to listen to. Kalli says, "Something with a parental advisory sticker on it." It's the same as when I hear those people rail against "illegal aliens" and I have the urge to play that Crudos song at a wall-rattling volume. It may not change anything, but it makes me feel better, at least for the moment…

MUSIC REVIEWS

THE EAT - It's Not The Eat, It's The Humidity (Alternative Tentacles, 2xCD)

Oh ho-ho-ho, what a clever fuckin' title. OK, I can appreciate a pun as much as the next person and I can appreciate the Eat as well. Maybe not two hours and twenty minutes at once, so you'll want to space it out. The Eat put out a few of those Holy Grail records that diehard collectors jizz themselves over—the *Communist Radio 7"* and *God Punishes The Eat* EP. They also include the cassette-only *Scattered Wahoo Action,* recorded in 1982, and a '96 EP. There's other unreleased stuff, too. I'm not sure of exact details, since one of the pages

in the booklet ran twice and I wonder if that's where the info was. No matter. So does the music match the collectability factor? Is it that awesome? Overall, it's pretty sweet. These guys mixed it up. Sure, there was a punk attitude, but the some of the songs also had a gloriously poppy bent, especially the famous "Communist Radio." The Eat were definitely a band that didn't take themselves too seriously—irreverent and funny. The second disc is all live and, while it's probably a one-time listen (maybe), these are solid, spirited performances. Their own songs are here, but they also bash around some "classic rock"—"LA Woman," "We're An American Band," "Wooly Bully," and "Flower Punk"—a sideways cover of "Hey Joe." They sound as though they were a whale of a band in that setting. Maybe even a manatee of a band (my own bad pun)—and please smack your knees, not those gentle giants, as mentioned in "Manatee Smacker." And you can easily skip over the white boy funk of "Nixon's Binoculars" as well. I'm sure the Eat were a welcome alternative in the land of Skynyrd—no fuckin' "Free Bird" here, thank whatever. (PO Box 419092, SF, CA 94146, www.alternativetentacles.com)

EPISODE - s/t (self-released, 7" EP)

A mystery band with no info or song titles, just lyrics. Actually, I do know the participants, but if I tell you, it could mean *big* trouble for me. OK, it's the guys from Fall Out Boy trying to regain punk cred. Enough joking. The first song comes out of the gates like 9 Shocks Terror, at least in the vocal and musical delivery, and the words are a warning call against the warmongering "leaders." A swell of feedback leads into the next song and offers the solution. Episode orders the listener to take out a certain leader but I'd better not be any more specific since I don't need the Secret Service breaking down my door and giving me a one-way ticket to Gitmo. Thorny punk with heart and adrenalin and not amelodic, either—the piercing guitar line on the last song has a good amount of sting and, if I was once again going to put it in a bit of context, it made me think of some of the 80s-era Euro hardcore bands who would have those kinds of leads. This is some kickass stuff. (http://www.myspace.com/episodesellouts)

GHOUL - Splatterthrash (Tankcrimes, LP)

This is my first time entering Ghoul's evil demimonde or, rather, the fictional place called Creepsylvania. The Ghouls are hooded, covered with blood, and I'd imagine put on quite an entertaining live show. This is their third album, or chapter, and it's a wild, spot-on amalgam of thrash metal, with more Euro-metal flavored stuff, creepy theremin and robotic effects, and even surf music ("Psychoplasm," "Baron Samedi"). Some of the vocals sound slowed down a bit to add to the wickedness. We're talking high concept here, most likely allegorical in nature—I'd be here all day offering details but it's a battle to the death for Ghoul, along with the former bullied "twerp" turned "Mutant Mutilator" by their side, as they take on the insidious cult leader. Something about a grail called the Crystal Skull. As I said, I came into this story in the middle. But it turns out this so-called leader is bent on Creepsylvania's conversion into a community of Christo-Fascism—hell, he even puts in a Disney Store—NOOOOOOOO! I said allegory before? We may be on to something here. The full-color gatefold sleeve, with front cover art by Greg Oakes, is a perfect accompaniment to Ghoul's tongue-in-cheek comic book come to life. It's horrorific! (PO Box 3495, Oakland, CA 94609, www.tankcrimes.com)

GOVERNMENT WARNING - Arrested (Grave Mistake, 7" EP)

Four new songs by GW—on first listen, I had it a notch below their 12" but it definitely holds its own. The title track has a mid-tempo west coast punk sound that distinguishes Government Warning from the pure thrash revivalists. In fact, that's a part of their overall sound—I can hear early Circle Jerks in "Safe and Sound," for instance. That song deals with a bit of "controversy," as seen in the letters pages of *Maximumrocknroll*, over Kenny using some perhaps ill-advised terminology when they played in Raleigh and the band covered Vile. His reply is that he never meant it: *"Political correctness has become a plague"* and *"I'm not intolerant/I just don't give a fuck."* Hmm…I have mixed feelings. I don't like when *anyone* acts self-righteous (and I resemble that remark) and some folks do need to be wound up, on occasion. On the other hand, using words like "faggot" from the stage is tiresome, at this point. OK, speech over. If snottiness and a bad attitude are assets, these guys have that in spades. (PO Box 12482, Richmond, VA 23241, www.gravemistakerecords.com)

HEX DISPENSERS - s/t (Alien Snatch, CD)

Dispensing (or delivering, if you're in a Judas Priest state of mind) the goods. The goods being a dark, thick garage/punk rock sound that has a purpose and urgency, to paraphrase the first song, "H.D. Local 23." The coolness quotient is increased with the *Apocalypse Now* reference for "Are You An Assassin," and the pounding yet catchy properties of the song don't hurt, either. They also have one of the best cover versions I've heard in a bit—a stripped-raw version of Gary Numan's "Down In The Park." It took me a second to realize what song it was. I also didn't realize there were only two guitars and drums/tambourine making this racket since the sound has so much fullness that it sounds like several instruments, including keyboards. Definitely got the hex on me. (Distributed in the US by Get Hip, PO Box 666, Canonsburg, PA 15317, www.gethip.com)

HIGH TENSION WIRES - Midnight Cashier (Dirtnap, CD)

Pretty nifty 'n' nervy punk/garage/pop. I think that covers it. It's not bash-over-the-skull fodder, but the songs have presence and inherent catchiness and taut, concise arrangements. The drive of a song such as "Wax Lips and Blood On The Telephone" is irresistible. And I could be crazy, but once in a while, there's a guitar/keyboards jab along the lines of Stereolab that's more punk, less Velvets, such as "Not Enough For Me." That song has a cool semi-freak-out bridge as well. It's funny—I was about to say some of the songs also remind me of the Marked Men and, lo 'n' behold, some of these guys play in that band. How perceptive! In fact, I like it better than the most recent Marked Men album in that it's rougher around the edges. (2615 SE Clinton St., Portland, OR 97202, www.dirtnaprecs.com)

KILL YOUR IDOLS - Salmon Swim Upstream (Vicious Circle, 7" EP) /Something Started Here (Lifeline, CD)

KYI have reached the end of the line and I don't know if these will be their final releases but *Salmon* features five songs recorded as demos in 2006 and, as a result, the sound quality is rough. That's absolutely fine with me—KYI were always a back-to-basics hardcore punk band and this provides the perfect ambiance, so to speak. Four rousers of their own plus a cover of "Skinhead Girl," popularized by The Oppressed—the latter could have been excised and the EP wouldn't lack for it. *Something Started Here* is an odds-and-ends anthology of EP and split tracks, comp appearances outtakes and the like, and it spans KYI's entire history. Kill Your Idols always maintained the aggressiveness and

would let melody seep in on occasion. One thing that never changed was Andy West's barking cadence, no matter the song. For that reason, KYI would never be too saccharine. And they also had a knack for putting life into overdone cover versions. Just when you think the world doesn't need another cover of "Can't Tell No One," they pull it off, and it takes brass ones to cover Sheer Terror (twice), but I'm sure Paul B. would approve—if he ever approved of *anything*. No slick production on most of these songs means it's a bruiser of a disc. The detailed liner notes give a play-by-play behind the songs, what was going on in the ranks, and it's obvious this band meant a great deal to Andy and Gary, who wrote the text. That enthusiasm always came through in the power of their music. (Vicious Circle: www.vcrecs.com / Lifeline: PO Box 682, Midlothian, IL 60445, www.lifelinerecords.com)

LOOK BACK AND LAUGH - State Of Illusion (self-released, 12" EP)

A quick four-song, one-sided EP—with a skeletal figure looking over a pair of TVs on the flip and the message being how media can be used to anesthetize the public. If you haven't heard this band before, it's a thorny, thrashy style reinforced with locomotive guitar and bass riffs. Tobia's vocals are snarling and nasty and it makes for a visceral combination. Impressive packaging, impressive music, as always, and they're also one of the best live bands out there. (PO Box 3103, Berkeley, CA 94703, www.lookbackandlaugh.net)

PYRAMID SCHEME - House Arrest (Art Squad, 7" EP)

For Pyramid Scheme's second 7", it's more rough hardcore plowing straight ahead, sometimes indulging in some double-speed thrash. Smart-assed lyrics, whether dealing with their Pittsburgh 'hood of Squirrel Hill on "Under The Radar" (I did like Jerry's Records when I visited there, though), chug-a-lug Christian hardcore ("Jesus Floorpunching Christ") or wannabe-rockstars ("We're A Band"). Pissed and pretty damn raging. (1749 Broadway Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15216, www.myspace.com / pyramidscheme)

STRAIGHTJACKET NATION - 6 Song EP (self-released, 7" EP)

Thanks to Beau for sending me this 7" all the way from Australia—goddamn this is a good one. Six fast, overpowering hardcore songs, one blending into another without a break (well, except when you flip the record over—duh). The ghost of Pig Champion is channeled through guitarist Dave's fingers and Daniel's going to get a sore throat if he keeps yelling like that. It's worth the risk, I suppose. I've seen this EP lurking in some distro boxes and you'd be doing yourself a favor by checking this out. (PO Box 239, North Carlton, Victoria 3054 AUSTRALIA, www.culthardcore.org)

TIME TO ESCAPE - s/t (Grave Mistake, 7" EP)

The look of the sleeve and record label screams early 80s hardcore, but I also hear an early Youth Of Today influence, at least musically. Parsons' vocals are ranty and the lyrics express boiled-up frustration and keep the edge thing out of it. Raw and fast and loud with the obligatory breakdowns. The medium-paced, bashing "Thick Enough" shows that a song can be tough without the tedious chug. This is a vinyl pressing of a demo recorded in the fall of '05 and I'd like to hear more. (PO Box 12482, Richmond, VA 23241, www.gravemistakerecords.com)

WASTED TIME - No Shore EP (Grave Mistake, 7" EP)

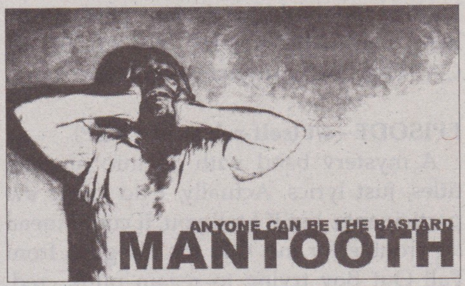
Metallica were Damage Inc. Wasted Time are Agitation Inc., and their vocalist Mark is the CEO. Finally, some new sounds from this band, who had one of my favorite 7"s of '06. Complexity? Nah, just full-speed-ahead battering with a raw ambiance, although the concluding "Same Story" has a slightly less frantic speed level. Having Brandon from Direct Control / Gov't Warning behind the drum kit is never a bad thing either. And I love the slam at Christian Coalition führer Pat Robertson on "Hey, Pat," particularly since the wife of an ex-friend of mine works for that wackjob and is also working on a master's at his Regent University. Bruisin'. (PO Box 12482, Richmond, VA 23241, www.gravemistakerecords.com)

ZERO DEFEX - War Hero—1983 Demos (Get Revenge, 7" EP)

This disc is part of Get Revenge's Demolition Series, which exhumes hardcore demos lost to time. One listen to this raw, fast Clevo band and it's easy to figure out where some of the more recent scummy bands from that city drew some inspiration. Incidentally, scummy is meant in a positive sense. I'm talking about the yowling vocals, rip-snortin' guitar and antisocial attitude. Here's an origination point—I'm sure the likes of the Inmates, H-100s, 9 Shocks, et al had this demo in their various tape decks at one time or another and those bands have the same shit-flying spirit. It's not all a lightning-fast pace—"Drugs," for instance, has segments that sound like an aural withdrawal although there's the sped-up chorus segment. Bile unleashed. By the way, the guitarist Tommy Strange later moved to the Bay Area and took a different musical turn with the likes of Strawman and Songs For Emma. A limited pressing, so don't fuck around. (PO Box 27071, Knoxville, TN 37917, www.getrevengerecords.com)

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS: In my August column about Jerry Falwell, I said that he'd referred to the "National Association of Women" as the "National Association of Witches." Got 'em both wrong… it was the National Organization for Women (NOW) and he called them the "National Order of Witches." Nice, eh?

Al Quint, PO Box 2746, Lynn, MA 01903, suburbanvoice@earthlink.net



Universities might as well carpet dormitories with sandpaper. Or maybe they do. Whatever they use, you'll certainly remember rolling around on it, breaking your edge and being talked down to by a Nazi the night before.

I've mentioned before that a few years back I "studied abroad" in Copenhagen, Denmark. I believe the two anecdotes were shitting my pants in a McDonald's bathroom and unsuccessful attempts at coitus with members of their supermodel regime. On the same note, I believe I've alluded to my edge-break, but I don't think I've ever described the oh-so-funny details of the event. Or at least I don't have enough gumption to search my columns and find out. So if I'm repeating myself, please keep reading just to humor me.

I'm quite familiar with the age-old adage "if thou art not now, thou art never was *edge*," so please save your hate mail-writin' energy for the likes of Mykel Board or Bill Florio. The phrase "in the time when I abstained from drugs and alcohol, although alcohol *is* a drug…" is rather

unwieldy in a sentence. Of course I could just be imagining that anyone that still gives a shit about straight edge that much takes the time to read my column. Anyway…

I was edge till 21. Typing that out I realize how lame it is. I really should have broken edge at 20 or 22 to save myself the shame of admitting this. Further adding to the embarrassment, I slipped into the drink a few weeks after my long-term girlfriend had dumped my ass. To my credit, though, I was living in a country where the legal drinking age is 18 and this particular break-up gave me more reason *not* to drink than if we would have stayed together. Does that make sense? What I'm trying to illuminate is that comedic gold: "WOMEN ARE CRAZY AND DRIVE US SANE MEN TO DRINKING!" Ho ho! Undoubtedly I have tickled my audiences pink, through and through, and will now break for paragraph while everyone recovers.

Anyhoo, it wasn't because I turned 21 or my girlfriend broke up with me. It was because of peer pressure! From Danish frat boys!

Well, no, it wasn't that either. They simply invited me to the party. It was actually the result of deep soul-searching, self-examination, and other hyphenated things leading me to exclaim, "Aah—what the hell?" And so it was history—I participated in what is called Around the World, where you go to everyone's (12 in all) dorm rooms and take a shot of something or other. It was totally killer, dude. I was so wasted, etc., etc.

It was at about the sixth or seventh room, when all the bros were crowding around some American girl showing off her boob job, that I was rolling around giving my arms and legs hefty doses of rug burn. I'm not sure who invited the guy or how he found the party, but he was sporting a flight jacket, combat boots, and a shitty goatee. The goatee was how I knew he was bad news. No hair + goatee = PIECE OF SHIT. You heard it here first. Of course he zeroed in on me and my minimalist hairstyle and thought, "here's a guy that really wants to talk about killing foreigners!"

But a skinhead's lust for xenophobic camaraderie may be so intense that it blinds them to the fact that this person just started drinking (heavily) and can't even muster the bearings to say "fuck off" when the one-sided conversation turns towards, "I really admire your president, George Bush…" Instead, I drooled out, "I'm going to go jump on my head in the courtyard. Talk to this guy about all that bullshit!" and replaced myself with some kid dressed as a vampire, or a hobbit or something. I went outside to jump on my head and pester some shitty swans.

The next day I sampled Carlsberg beer. No offense to any Carlsberg fanatics out there, but this shit gave me the worst case of "bitter beer face" I've ever had in my pathetic existence. For the rest of the semester I tried drinking the cheapest shit I could buy in Albertslund's "Netto." I found out eventually, while drinking it in my Russian Literature class, that it was in fact "redneck beer," and was subsequently made the fool by my midget professor. But now I feel like I'm repeating myself, so I'll leave it at that.

ENDNOTES:
email: gregory.mantooth@gmail.com
Warzone Womyn recently played our last show! Weep, you fools! Thanks to everyone who gave a shit about our fourth-wave "power violence." We have our last tracks coming out on 625's *Trapped in a Scene* comp LP. Maybe a discography will come one day? Pffft. You'll probably just send-space that shit anyway. Adios, suckers!

I am far from an expert on immigration in US history. But my own personal opinion, ignorant though it may be, is that essentially the same gears keep turning in a never-ending machine of xenophobia and racism. Everybody seems to think that the door of immigration should be closed approximately after their relatives have come here and settled.

Everybody has some romantic (and untrue) story about how their relatives came here with nothing, assimilated quickly, and "made it," and how all the newer immigrants aren't doing that. There's always some shit about how our country is being "invaded" and how their relatives are the good ones and the new ones are the bad ones. It's always some story concocted to make them look good and demonize other people. There is always a subtext of racism, of course. And there is the piss-poor analysis that is endemic to the immigration debate about undocumented people. They blame them for coming here, "invading" our country.

Even if you are going to be a xenophobe and anti-immigration, at least have some perspective on why people come here: the demand by major US corporations and businesses for cheap labor. If you have to ascribe blame, and truly see the people immigrating here to improve there situation as some threat, then at least blame the right people. But personally, I feel that it's quite natural for anybody, anywhere to do whatever they can to improve their life situation. And it's pretty brave in my book to come to a country where you may not know anybody, away from your family, in a country with a different language, different culture, and under fear of being arrested and deported. It gives new meaning to "home of the brave." It makes you search for an adjective to describe the fear and hatred of anti-immigration folks. Definitely not living up to our credo, I don't think.

If anything makes America special and strong, it's our diversity. No society has the cross-section of humanity we have. I believe that it doesn't work well and that the power structure and society are very perverse, but on that basic level of what exists here, it is unique. We have a lot of potential, but so much of that is wasted on a racist, capitalist, imperialist, and fear-based worldview.

Like I said, everybody wants the door closed after they come in and settle. "When my grandfather came here from Italy/Ireland/Norway/Germany he worked his fingers to the bone and…" I always find it funny that people with the most vociferous hatred of immigrants are not that removed from being immigrants themselves. Perhaps it's not that surprising. Maybe I am just a smartass, but whenever I hear someone saying, "they come to this country and steal our jobs," etc. I often ask, "Oh, what was your name again?" Schwersky? Milano? Hoffmeyer? Must have come over on the Mayflower. Or maybe you're Native American. I realize, of course, that it's not a measure of when your relatives came here or how "ethnic" your name is. It's all measured on a backdrop of white supremacy, Anglo-based whiteness. It's OK if your last name isn't Smith or Williams as long as you tow the line. Who gives a shit. Unless you're First Nations, your situation is just alien to this land as the current wave of immigrants (in fact, as Latinos are generally Mestizos, a blend of native peoples and Europeans, so one could

say they have more right to be here). Plus, much of the west belonged to Mexico for far longer than it's been part of the US. The border moved. Gringos started companies that demanded cheap labor to exploit, and drew them to come over. So then it's their fault for coming here? Give me a break.

People of my heritage are a vast minority. My relatives came here in 1608, on the first ship to Jamestown, Virginia. 12 years before the Mayflower (I have some of those ass-draggers as relatives too). I have done quite a bit of research on this part of US history. I am sure many of you are aware of this, but they didn't come here fleeing religious persecution. They came here because they were low-level nobility without portfolio, meaning no land. There were some workers and artisans but a lot of them were just lazy people who wanted land so they could earn money and not work. There were no lofty ideals (if any, base ideals) and it was based on trying to improve a situation where people had a title but no land. They got their land and eventually set up a system where they could sit back and live a life proper to their title, eventually bringing in indentured servants from Britain. Later African slaves.

They came here because of a sense of entitlement and greed. They starved to death in droves when supplies from Britain dried up. Why? They refused to plant crops themselves, didn't know how, refused to learn from the Native Americans, and were used to, and expected to have things given to them. Some of them survived by buying surplus corn from Native Americans. The smartest ones left the British settlement altogether and went to live with local tribes. Jamestown was a graveyard for decades with the vast majority of indentured British subjects coming here dying in the first five years. My ancestors, the "Gentlemen of Consequence," eventually, and on the backs of thousands of exploited laborers (and later slaves) who they enticed to come to this marginal place, managed to have the life they felt they deserved. I don't think I need to spell it out for you, the connections here.

What has changed? Well, the US isn't a death trap, or a marginal place, but those who view themselves as the inheritors of some kind of American legacy still have the same entitlement, and delusional sense of righteousness. And this ties into the white supremacist system of course. Most white Americans, even if their ancestors go back far like mine, were not descended from the scumbags I was. They were likely related to people my relatives exploited throughout history. But, as Americans seem to always do, they now identify with the rich, and those who are fucking them over in every way and have been for generations. They are completely on board with the legacy my ancestors forged. They don't criticize the corporations that abuse workers and immigrants. They blame the latter.

Being from such a blue-blooded family has been weird for me. My family isn't particularly rich. My grandmother used to say our money is so old it's running out. I know very few people whose family is as aware of their distant heritage. There isn't much romance left in my family about this history. The more we learn from research the more we find it's very dubious. We have at home a sword and portrait of a Colonel from the US army around 1800. Family heirloom. We also have a chunk of Hitler's marble desk my Uncle Jerry snagged in WWII, but that's another story. This Colonel was a notorious butcher of Native Americans throughout the Midwest, as I recently learned. I grew up looking at that portrait and looking at that sword with its scabbard in fragments, as my mom warned me to be careful with it. I was in awe of its design and how beautiful its inlay was. Now I can only think of how many people he murdered with it, how much innocent blood had stained it. Maybe how much it had to be washed for it to look as clean as it does. Or more likely, how he may have ordered soldiers to attack with it raised in the air.

We also have copies of the text of a will from a relative of mine. His last name is a family name, which is also my middle name. This was in the mid 1700s. The will addresses the fates of dozens of slaves and their children. Some he frees, some he keeps enslaved while freeing their children, some he enslaves until a certain age, some he keeps enslaved and their children enslaved (apparently this wasn't uncommon, often they said this to indicate any children they had in the future would also be enslaved). All this in a will, like the writ of a god, deciding people's fate. Not a government order, or a judge's decision, but one man, perhaps, a "Gentleman of Consequence," saying what he wanted, for whatever reason, who fucking knows. Whenever I fill out my middle name on a form or something I am reminded of how this guy, by signing the same name, could condemn people to slavery, death, or freedom.

We came here out of a sense of entitlement, with goals of conquest and exploitation. The immigrants coming here today not only don't, but cannot have such aspirations. They don't have a sense of arrogance and superiority. There is no conquest to be had. They have no power to exploit. At every level they are the victims of the above processes. The documented and undocumented people come here to work and to make life better for themselves and their families. That is a simple, noble motivation, deserving of the respect and honor that was wrongly placed in the hands of my forebears and their legacy. If we want to understand what it really means to be an American, we should listen to immigrants, whether documented or not, and understand their experience and not disassociate it from our own. Understand the system of capitalist exploitation. Chances are your ancestors were fucked over in similar ways.

Of course, this stuff I am talking about could be applied to other countries, and migrations going on throughout the world. It is particularly nuanced and bizarre I think in the US. There are other countries that share the identity of being immigrant-based, of course—some in South America, and others, like Australia or New Zealand. I am sure those countries have their own complexities but I really don't know enough about them to speak with much intelligence.

How punk rock relates to international immigration and emigration is something that hasn't been explored much, at least in a written format. I know that plenty of punks from "first world" countries manage to get around and often stay in other countries for months or years at a time. I also know plenty of punks in the US from Latin American countries without the same means that American punks have who are here undocumented. I think a lot of it comes down to means and disproportionate power of socio-economic and political influence. How many people have come to the US and landed one way or another in trouble and their governments can't do much about it politically, socially, or economically? How many Americans have gotten in trouble overseas and there is some huge shitfit that occupies headlines and sanctions, etc. takes place until they are freed? Examples would be a few medical students in various Central American countries (justification for invading the fucking place), hostages in Iran (botched invasion, embargo), international outcry when that dude got caned in Singapore, etc. How often is the situation the opposite? How many countries have had the power to do anything at all about us detailing people in ICE custody for months to years or keeping their citizens locked in Guantanamo?

SIX TWO FIVE

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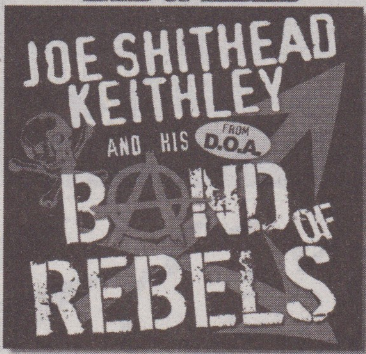
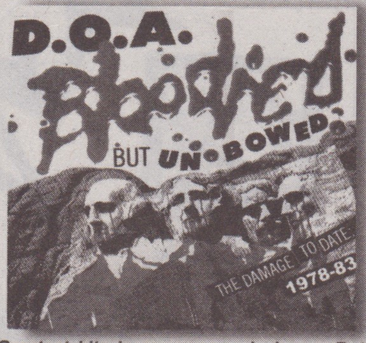
JOE SHITHEAD KEITHLEY
BAND OF REBELS



Band of Rebels is the new solo album from Joe Shithead Keithley, Canada's godfather of punk and leader of the legendary D.O.A. It's punk-a-billy, ska and roots punk. 14 tracks that are wildly energetic, political and funny.

D.O.A.
BLOODIED BUT UNBOWED: THE DAMAGE TO DATE 1978-83



Greatest hits is an overused phrase. But this truly is some of the greatest, finest and bestest songs from that classic period when DOA were easily the greatest band around. Don't believe me? Check out the best of their first two albums, and then some. And then tell me this is not quite superb. Really great. Truly great. Every song a bona fide hit. Great!" ~ AMP Magazine

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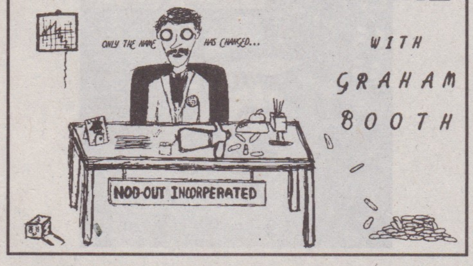
The bottom line is that your value as a human being, the way the world works now, is directly related to your status in the power structure of international capitalism and first world hegemony. Whether you are a punk, a revolutionary, it doesn't really matter—we are all affected by this. The system of domination reaches across the board.

I do think it would be interesting to further explore how punks across the board have used creative means to circumvent some of this bullshit. There are many stories of "marriages" so that people can stay in other countries, bribing officials, and so forth. At our best, punks can be like an extended family that can work together and transcend the bullshit of our capitalist power structure. We can't count on out governments to do the right thing on immigration: by definition there is so much invested in the structure that relates to other aspects of exploitation. I think understanding the system and managing the harmful effects of immigration laws and oppression and working together to address them could go a long way to promote the international network of punks. Of course, this is not separate from the movement internationally for immigrant rights and human rights for all people, but I think we could use our network and community to come up with some creative solutions for our little area of human society.

Nick, PO Box 18884, Oakland, CA 94619, nick@mangelslakt.org

ROCKET TO NOWHERE



So—big surprise—I bought a bunch of records this month. No, but it's really interesting. For the very first time ever I found an actual "collection" of punk LPs at a thrift store. I almost talked myself out of stopping. I have looked through the same six shelves of records for the last two years on an almost weekly basis. This is usually absolute crapola and I literally have to force myself to get down on my knees and touch the dirty moldy dregs of dumpster-worthy trash week after week. You know, most of the sleeves are empty, and about a third of them are totally split, separated, and dispersed amongst the shelves. This is like "Oh, my garage flooded and everything on the floor has fused into one gigantic brick of dank cardboard and vinyl but I just can't bring myself to throw it away" kind of stuff.

But this visit was different. I was on my knees, you know, questioning my sanity, when all of a sudden I spot the cover for the 45 GRAVE *Autopsy* LP. I pull it out, and, what do you know, the record is actually still in it. I take it out of the sleeve, and I can't even see any scratches. Wow. A playable punk record. Looks like the old man who skims the good records before they hit the floor actually missed a decent record this week. I hate that guy. And, what's this? A CRAMPS *Psychedelic Jungle* LP right behind it? SCREAM's *Still Screaming*? I have to check; yes, it's the yellow/brown first press label with the insert—suh-weet! DR. KNOW's *Plug in Jesus*—ha ha, it has the blue logo—and, what's this? The band members inscribed the inner sleeve with clever notes like, "Incest is still the best to try your mom sometime —Rick Dr. Know." Ahh, Southern California. GOVERNMENT ISSUE's *Joyride*. I needed that one again. CONDEMNED TO DEATH's *Diary of a Love Monster* LP...still haven't heard that one. And then one I'd never heard of: OUR NEIGHBORS SUCK's *Isolation* LP—what's this, on Rock-O-Rama, but the band is from Arizona? Whatever, dude, it's in the pile. By the end of the morning, I had 25 records and a DEAD MILKMEN *Big Lizard in My Backyard* cassette in my pile. I rang 'em up at the counter and the final damage was all of $12. Stoked!

But the real excitement this month was a brand new punk record swap in East LA! Well, Montebello to be exact. A punk rock library employee decided that Los Angeles was in need of a punk swap and talked the library into letting him use a meeting room for it. The price for a dealer table was all of $20, and the illustrious organizer Javier had no problem filling the room with dealers this past Saturday afternoon. I had initially considered getting a table, but my punk trade stocks are looking pretty slim lately, so I thought I'd have a hard time filling it. Thankfully, my friend Rob already had a table, and was kind enough to let me squeeze a box of LPs on the table with him.

As far as record swaps go, I've definitely been to more expansive ones, but nothing beats a condensed critical mass of punk vinyl all in one room. That's right—no 70s rock and bootleg CDs to contend with. Just punk records, pure and simple. Of course there were a few deals to be had, but the real perks of a record swap—versus eBay or your local used record store—is that you pay a reasonable fixed price, and usually can bargain with sellers on their prices.

Now that we're a good ten years into the internet auction age, people are starting to realize that eBay isn't all it's cracked up to be. Sure, it's good for selling certain kinds of records. If you're looking to unload a big group of records all at once, it's comforting to know that in seven days' time you will be rid of a good portion of them, no questions asked. But it also takes *a lot* of time to take photos, write listings, make unwilling bidders pay you, ship records all over the world, and sweat over charge-backs. And there's no telling how much you'll end up getting for a given record.

That's where record swaps come in. The only prep is putting price tags on, shoving them in a box, and driving them across town. You probably won't be able to get some of the crazy premiums you might get on eBay, but you can set the price where you want it, and you don't have to let it go for less. This is a great way to sell $5 or $10 records with established prices. I also sold several records in the $20-30 range, and that sure beats selling it for $26.43 on eBay, taking out $4 in fees, and having to mail it to Croatia. I'll take a $20 bill any day!

As a buyer, I continue to be amazed how many great records are still lurking out there. With no sales tax and no shipping charges, I generally save $5-10 on any given record. Say I win some record on eBay for $10; I usually end up spending $18 plus shipping in the end. At a record show, even if the exact same record is marked $15, I'm saving money. Plus I can visually inspect it for scratches, and probably talk the guy down to $12. Of course, in my experience, most records that are $10 on the internet are more like $3-5 in the field. And nothing beats a good dollar bin.

It seems to me like record show attendance has steadily been going up lately, and with good reason. Nowadays, most used record stores are completely worthless—either they've stopped buying vinyl entirely or all of the halfway decent records go straight to the Bay. And in these days of computer-focused isolation, record shows provide a great venue for fellow collectors to get some face time and hang out. The only difficulty is that dealers are having a harder and harder time finding good records to sell. Even so, I seldom have a hard time spending $50-100 at any given show. Just go in with an open mind and you're bound to find a handful of interesting records. Take a chance—you may be

surprised.

So with that rant, I should probably get to the real meat of the conversation...the finds! There have definitely been better swaps, but there were still some good records to be had. My friend Rob beat me to the UNITED MUTATION *Fugitive Family* 7", a personal fave in the Dischord catalog. Instead of paying the cover price of $40, he managed to swap a JFA *Blatant Localism* 7" he'd picked up for $3 a few weeks back. Some of the other tasty items I saw other people snag include both CHAOTIC DISCHORD's (Riot City) LPs, a COLERA LP from Brazil, some rare SPITS tour releases, SAMHAIN *Unholy Passion* for $20, etc... Various people bought my LPs by BIG BOYS, GEARS, the *Los Angelinos* LP compilation with the best BRAT song ever, FLIPPER, various Mystic comps, etc...

Meanwhile, I was able to reminisce with some guilty pleasures from my youth by purchasing most of the Hardline Records catalog (VEGAN REICH...RAID...like, ewww!!). My score of the day was definitely THE FASTBACKS' *Every Day is Saturday* 12" on the Seattle (No Threes) label for $12. With all that extra spending cash, I splurged on the legendary Test Press of the *Beach Blvd.* compilation LP with a hand-colored cover. If you have not already done so, go out and find yourself this comp—beach punk doesn't get much better. SIMPLETONES or THE CROWD—it's hard to pick a winner. I have to give credit to MRR, specifically an ancient Rev. Norb column whose unending praise turned me on to that compilation and a lifelong love for speedy beach punk. As I leave you this month, I would like to encourage each and every one of you to go out and find a local record swap. Get to it!

In late June 2007, the Coleman-Domenici (both are Republikkkan Senators) amendment to the Senate's immigration reform bill—a bill to provide for comprehensive immigration reform and for other purposes—would have prevented immigrant women from seeking aid from law enforcement when they are the victims of domestic or sexual violence. A critically important issue, it received much needed media attention. Thankfully, the amendment* never made it to the floor before the bill was pulled on June 28, 2007 and returned to the calendar. Unfortunately, however, it's likely that future immigration bills will contain similar onerous provisions.

For numerous reasons, the Coleman-Domenici amendment was a supremely bad idea worth fighting against. Among these reasons:

Immigrant women should not have to choose between being deported and getting help from law enforcement when they are the victims of domestic or sexual violence. Sexual and domestic crime victims, regardless of immigration or citizenship status, should be allowed to go to law enforcement officials for help without fear that they will be deported. Immigrant women face increased obstacles in obtaining help from non-law enforcement sexual assault and domestic violence service providers due to language barriers, social isolation, and accessibility barriers.

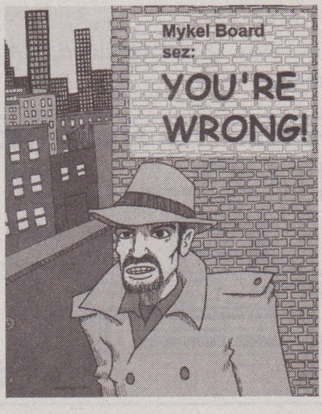
There are three million undocumented women in the United States, many working as nannies for children or as caregivers for the elderly. Contributors to society and equal human beings, they are forced to live in the shadows. Due to their legal status, they are already enduring workplace exploitation, sexual harassment, low wages, and poor working conditions. Many of these women are subject to violent crimes inside and outside their homes but do not report these crimes to police out of fear of being deported. Often, their documented, battering partners (on whose immigrant status they depend) threaten to take their children away if they report the abuse. Like all women, immigrant women are at high risk for domestic violence, but due to their immigration status, they may face a more difficult time escaping it.

Each year, approximately two million women are physically or sexually assaulted by an intimate partner in the US. Recent studies show that more than half of the victims of intimate partner violence are foreign-born, while 45 percent were born in the United States. According to the Family Violence Prevention Fund, 48 percent of Latinas in one study reported that their partner's violence against them had increased since they immigrated to the US, and a survey of immigrant Korean women found that 60 percent had been battered by their husbands. Additionally, married immigrant women experience higher levels of physical and sexual abuse than unmarried immigrant women—59.5 percent compared to 49.8 percent, respectively.

Legislation like the proposed Coleman-Domenici amendment, including the Congress's Violence Against Women Act of 2005, would overturn state and local policies that ensure that a victim's immigration status remains confidential when reporting battery to law enforcement. This jeopardizes the lives of immigrant women and children, and just as importantly, turns the attention of state and local law enforcement away from crime prevention and instead encourages preying on immigrant victims of abuse. Trying to save money by turning police officers into immigration officers at the expense of women and children's lives is abhorrent.

It's plain wrong for undocumented immigrant women to have to "choose" between suffering abuse or getting thrown out of the country. For justice, public safety, and community trust, immigrants of every status must be included as members of society, without coercion or threat.

*The amendment was first introduced in late May 2007 during a previous Senate debate on immigration, and was voted down by only one vote on May 24, 2007. Reintroduced in June, it was changed to include an exception for teachers and health care providers who encounter people who may be undocumented.



"How can any piece of art claim to have cutting edge integrity unless it features at least one act of anal intercourse?" —John Fardell

I don't know who John Fardell is, or where I picked up the quote. But the guy's right in a bigger way than he guessed. It's not only art, but life, that one way or another involves getting it in the rear.

This month, I want to write about two topics: normalcy and, the theme of this issue: immigration. Can I relate both these to anal intercourse? Of course I can. I can relate *anything* to anal intercourse. Bend over and I'll show you how.

PART ONE. So I'm watching *New York 1* to see what the weather's gonna be. They have the world's least accurate forecast. But it's on every ten minutes. And they usually get it right when talking about conditions outside right now.

While I wait, they run a feature called *On Stage.* It's a review show. Newspaper and magazine writers discuss Broadway and its stars. It's Tony Award time. They're discussing which plays are going to win. Which actors will clutch the golden statue, while thanking people nobody's ever heard of.

I can't afford to go to Broadway, so I don't have a clue what they're talking about anyway. The show's a buzz in the background while I struggle to lace up my army boots.

"My boyfriend saw that play," says one of the writers. "He was just not moved."

Huh? He said that on TV? *My boyfriend?* I mean the guy is as fem as a pink sweater, but to actually *say* it? Speaking of anal intercourse! Yowsah! That takes more balls than a glass box at Chucky Cheese!

This is great. I'm thinking. It's gonna make waves. A regular network guy. Time-Warner. And he says *my boyfriend!* Hooey! Give that guy ten points.

Without waiting for the weather report, I run to the subway, anxious to spread the news. I get into work, breathless. I gotta tell my fellow English teachers what the guy said.

"He said *my boyfriend,"* I say. "On TV! On like the real news. You know, what everybody watches? This is gonna be big. An explosion. Like the World Trade Center. Like Janet Jackson's tit."

"Oh please," comes the voice from Martin, a homo himself. I figure he'd love the info. I figure wrong.

"He's theater. Of course he's gay. No one will care."

"But, on TV?" I beg.

"Mykel," says May. (Teaching's her day job. Her *real* job's a stage actress. She watches this stuff all the time.) "I can't believe you're shocked. It's just so... so... normal."

"Aaargh," I scream, hiding my face in my hands. "Don't tell me that. Please don't tell me that!"

Flash ahead: The next week. I'm on the subway, reading an interesting article in *BNI,* a great porno review zine I occasionally write for.

I'm up to 1998 in my unread zine pile. It's the Clinton scandal era. Always good for some cigar and Lewinsky jokes. In this issue, David Steinberg writes about how Mike Wallace is asking Clinton associates about a remark. He quotes a *Newsweek* report that has Clinton saying to an aide, "Let's talk pussy."

Steinberg reports that Wallace seems fascinated by the word *pussy.* More than the word, he's fascinated by his ability to use it on TV. To have a context for it. Out in the open. The famous newsman uses it at every opportunity, like a little boy who just learned the word *fuck.*

Although the word is bleeped each time, it's obviously *pussy.*

"It was amazing," says David. "The joy he showed in repeating that word."

I think back to that Broadway critic on TV. *My boyfriend.* He said. Joyless. Casual. The thrill gone. Ah, it's sad.

America has all the freedom of an Islamic Republic... maybe one step up. *They* can't have alcohol. *We* need ID to buy it—and have the highest legal drinking age in the world. *They* have Allah in their daily life. *We* have God in the Pledge of Allegiance. *Their* government and religious extremists censor their TV news. *Our* government, religious extremists and advertisers censor our TV news.

In America, the morality cops are on duty 24 hours a day. If George Bush doesn't get you, then Al Sharpton will.

When I was in Australia, I did half a dozen radio interviews. I said *shit, fuck, piss,* and *she pulled the hair from my balls with her teeth.* No one blinked a labia. I was like Mike Wallace with my newfound joy...until I realized it didn't matter. In Australia, no one cares.

What does it mean? Glad you asked. There are two things here: danger and an opportunity.

The danger is that the odd and challenging will become commonplace. Homos have destroyed their power to shock by dressing up in white shirts and ties and predicting Tony Award winners. Is it any wonder they want to get married?

"Oh please; we're just like everybody else," they say. "Faithful, conservative, hard-working, Republican."

Why bother being a homo if you're gonna be *just like everybody else?* The strange has become normal. And homos will continue to become just another market segment, another tax deduction.

The opportunity? There's still enough *pussy* to get bleeped on the air. There's still Al Sharpton saying get the *bitch* and the *ho* out of hip hop. In a country as Muslim as this one, we can use this conservatism to *shock.*

My fantasy is to call up Rush Limbaugh or another of those idiots who proclaim how *terrorists hate us because of our freedom.*

"You want to see how free we are?" I'll shout in the phone. *"Fuck!* Did you hear that word? Was that broadcast to all your listeners? Your broadcast has a ten-second censor delay. That's how free we are. *Fuck! Fuck! Fuck a nappy-headed ho!* Did you get that out there in radioland? How much of that got to your radio speaker? That's how fuckin' free we are."

PART TWO. OK, so I'm supposed to write about immigration. I will. But first, I'll confess—I don't get it. I mean, why anyone would want to immigrate to this hellhole is beyond me. No healthcare. 24-hour surveillance, ID checks to get into a bar. You can't see a breast on TV. Immigrate? How come? With all the countries in the world, why come to a pukepot like this one?

Step off the boat...get fingerprinted, eye-scanned, and fucked. It's not the type of anal sex I'd move halfway around the world for. America is xenophobic, sex negative, totalitarian, jingoistic. Why the fuck would you want to live here?

Of course, America is not the only place people are moving to. My London pals tell me that when asking directions on the street, you first have to ask, *Do you speak English?*

Much of the world is moving to Europe, Japan, and other formerly called "first world" countries. They're filling up with new immigrants. Old residents complain. Elect right-wingers who promise to do something about the "problem."

The first world is responsible for the problems third-worlders are immigrating to get away from. The Europeans planted the poison ivy and now they're going to itch. Serves 'em right. But I'm an American, so I want to talk about things here.

According to the instant research conducted on my behalf by the Google company, the number one reason for immigration to the US is *economic opportunity.* That means the right to work a 60-hour week, with no health benefits, for $5.25 an hour... or worse.

Huh?

Well, since most immigrants are uneducated, unable to get a job in their home countries, and with no connections to anywhere else in the world, it makes sense.

American companies like Wal-Mart and Nike pay $1.49 a day to workers in China. Of course those Chinese workers want to come here to earn $5.25 an hour. What an

increase! Yeah! They have to live six to a one-room apartment, but they can make a fortune. Put $10 in the bank. Wowee!

American companies keep wages low in other countries. They dictate working conditions and pay off government officials to prevent improvement.

In some countries, the US has so skewed the economy that it has doubled or tripled the poverty. African countries, for example, have land with good enough soil to feed the entire population. But the US buys coffee, or rubber...and that's what they plant. No rice. No carrots. Nothing of any use to the locals. The farmers get a pittance. The local population goes hungry—no beats or potatoes for them. Uniroyal needs its rubber.

These conditions are so awful that people have to leave. They move to where working conditions are only very bad...not awful. A big improvement.

Like in Europe—only more so, the US creates the conditions people flee from. Where do they flee? You guessed it, to the US.

It wasn't always this way. Who knows why that first wave of immigrants, the Mongols, came to this land? I guess they just wanted to see what was far away. That was 5000 years ago.

The Europeans, 4500 years after them, came for political freedom, or the right to religiously persecute people who didn't agree with them.

After the first wave came others. For reasons that range from being kidnapped and sold into slavery to escaping a potato famine. Wave after wave they came... the poorest, the lowest level of each society. Wanting something here they couldn't get at home.

Every few years, the old immigrant groups get scared of the new immigrants. Each group begins to think of itself as normal/native. The others are "outsiders."

Like homos, who've moved from *them* to *us* (Can you believe there are homo groups against intergenerational sex, prostitution, S&M, and other sexual minorities?), each immigrant group calls for bans on the following ones.

In 1882, Congress passes the *Chinese Exclusion Act*. That's *after* most of the railroads had been built with Chinese labor. These were not immigrants with college degrees.

That same year, Congress expands its list of "unacceptable immigrants." These include "beggars, contract laborers, the insane, and unaccompanied minors." Already excluded: "criminals and prostitutes."

A 1917 law requires adult immigrants to show they can read and write. It's the first of many to bring a classier breed of immigrants to the country. The law also excludes people from most of Asia and the Pacific Islands. Not classy enough, I guess.

In 1921, Congress sets a ceiling on the number of people allowed to enter America. This quota limits immigrants from any one country to three percent of those of that nationality living the United States in 1910.

The Immigration Act of 1924 limits the number of immigrants from outside the Western Hemisphere to about 154,000 a year. The distribution is again based on percentages of nationalities making up the current population. That formula insures that 90 percent of the new immigrants will be from northern and western Europe.

It's 2007 and idiots in Washington once more want to put the brakes on immigration, slow it down to a few nuclear scientists, terrorist experts, and pharmaceutical engineers. The Democratic-supported (shame on you, Teddy Kennedy) and fortunately defeated bill would have set up a points system for immigrants. Not based on country, but on "expertise."

If you know about computers, or you have a college degree, you get points. As if George Washington, the Chinese coolies who built the railroads, or the Irish immigrants who worked the shipyards had college degrees.

Wake up, assholes! America is a place where you develop points, not where you bring them with you. Immigrants are *supposed* to be from the bottom. They're *supposed* to be the ones who can't read or write. They're *supposed* to be the exploited, the lowest rungs on the ladder. That's why they're here. We shouldn't fuck 'em up the ass.

On second thought, maybe those Congressional representatives are right after all. They're looking for special immigrant qualities to improve America, not cheapen it. OK. I propose a point system already created: the original one. Emma Lazarus made it poetry. It's pasted on the Statue of Liberty. I've just added the points:

Give me your tired: 10 points
Your poor: 10 points
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free: 20 points
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore: 20 points
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost: 20 points
to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door!

That point system has served America well for 200 years. Let's keep it.

ENDNOTES: [email subscribers (god@mykelboard.com) or website viewers (www.mykelboard.com) will get live links and a chance to email comment on the column]

—> *Get dirty be happy dept: Bottom Line Health* reports that mycobacterium vaccae, a bacterium that lives in dirt, may increase brain levels of serotonin. That's the brain chemical that causes happiness *and a general feeling of well-being*.

No wonder Congress is so grumpy about immigrants. They're too clean! I say give 'em some more dirt!

—> *If you can't beat 'em, use 'em dept:* The website MightyBids.com is a free-to-list Auction site created by two guys who were annoyed with eBay's listing fees.

Now, AP reports that the creators are tired of maintaining the site and want to sell it. Where are they listing the site for sale? You guessed it: eBay.

—> *What's wrong with this story dept:* In a small article in my local paper, an AP reporter writes, "Police in Ontario, Canada are looking for a man who approached women and asked them to kick him in the groin." According the report, this happened three times with three different women. Police Sgt. Cate Welsh said, "The man's request is not a crime." So what's wrong?

You got it. If the man's request is not a crime, then why are police looking for him?

—> *Let's see 'em make this mainstream dept:* I'm not sure if it was Ted who sent it to me. I found it in an old file on my computer: http://www.richsalter.btinternet.co.uk/cks2/index.html is the link. It's for "Shooting Clay Kittens." They bounce and make a lot of blood!

—> *Test of faith dept:* I love it when Christians' belief in God is so great they go all out for it...and it kills 'em.

In August 2006, in Libreville, Gabon, a 35-year-old pastor insisted he could walk on water. He only needed to have the faith. So the pastor set out to walk across a major estuary, the path of a 20-minute ferry ride. The man could not swim. He drowned and was posthumously given the Darwin Award.

For those who are unfamiliar with these, the Darwins are named after the dis-

coverer of evolution and are given to those who help keep the gene pool chlorinated, by eliminating their own stupid selves.

—> *Don't click that link dept: PC Magazine* reports that Google has fixed its *Sponsored Links* with a special cookie. If you click on one of those links, the cookie rests in your computer and follows you from site to site. Forever.

Say you're looking for KY Jelly. Google will show you some responses. You click on a sponsor, a cookie goes on to your computer. Now you check out HillaryClinton.com. That cookie is still in your computer, and the odds are you'll see KY ads on her site as well as on moralmajority.com and redsoxsuck.org.

Yep, you'll carry around your KY search until mom asks you about it in the morning.

Late note: Due to recent exposure of this plot, Google has promised to remove the cookies... after two years... provided you don't use Google again in the meantime. Each time you use the site, they renew the cookie. Now that's an improvement! Yeah, right.

From Stuyvesant Park to Disney—We Have Arrived!

Touch so brutal and illuminated

I don't remember how I first discovered Stuyvesant Park; maybe it was some guy who brought me there from the porn shop on 3rd Avenue. It was one of those frigid nights when you think the rain should be snow but it's not, it's rain and somehow that makes it colder. The park was dark, or as dark as downtown gets, the gates were closed, they looked closed but they weren't, and when we got inside there was someone waiting in the rain and I thought oh, this is the place.

But also David Wojnarowicz wrote about Stuyvesant Park, I remember he'd found shelter there but that was long before—by the time I moved to New York he'd already been dead five years, shelter was harder to inhabit. So much longer ago it seemed when I'd discovered David in an obituary, can I even call him by his first name? Stuyvesant Park is a strange corner of downtown, without the grandeur of Union Square or the counterculture allure of Tompkins Square Park but it was a corner where I found touch so brutal and illuminated, gentle too but this also was disappearing thanks to Giuliani and gentrification, surveillance and chain stores, NYU dorms and other crackdowns on public sensibility.

When they started locking the gates it didn't really matter, everyone moved to the steps of the church where people were also sleeping, sometimes there was overlap and sometimes the adventure wound down steps, into below-ground alcoves dead-ending into doors. I'm not sure what these spaces were designed for, probably not the shivering embrace of hands and mouths and eyes and cocks, bodies grasping yes. In these makeshift rooms or thrusting right up against the gates of the park like that was some kind of shelter, just desire, maybe someone would look out that was enough and sometimes the cops were there too but then everyone would walk around the block, a good way to discover other not-quite-hiding places, you could memorize landmarks for next time then return with more information. People always returned, that's what I counted on.

Now the gates are always locked, after polite hours when everything used to start. No one even walks around the perimeter, searching. Maybe it's not as blatant as a gleaming white tower on Rivington, but gazing in sometimes it's hard just to remember, the way gentrification even robs you of imagination.

Disney will save us—thank you, Disney!

I can't resist a little bit of media critique after reading "Corporate America: the New Gay Activists," a post on The Huffington Post (supposedly a progressive blog). This masterpiece is by Kirk Snyder, author of *The G Quotient: Why Gay Executives are Excelling as Leaders... And What Every Manager Needs to Know*, who offers so many stellar quotes that it's hard even to know where to start, so let me go right through in a somewhat conventional linear manner—starting with the beginning, that is.

Snyder informs us of a fascinating Gallup poll that found that "almost ninety percent of Americans said they believe gay people should have equal rights in the workplace. Interestingly, only forty-seven percent of these same people believe that being gay is 'morally acceptable.'"

Now, instead of calling attention to this obvious contradiction, Snyder decides that "Even those people who still think we are not 'morally acceptable' have to admit there is nothing threatening or subversive going on among these professionals." Snyder is speaking of gay professionals in the corporate workplace, and he may certainly be correct in maintaining that these model employees are doing nothing threatening or subversive at IBM, Exxon, Halliburton, or any other company they inhabit. Although perhaps this is the problem—or one of the many problems—of the assimilation success story, right? I mean, that these tragic gay employees only further the monstrous violence of corporate profiteers instead of doing anything "threatening or subversive." Most of these lovely employees are no doubt exploring and promoting race and class privilege at work (instead of using privilege to challenge systems of oppression), then going home to work on promoting gentrification and other forms of neighborhood "beautification" in order to further real estate development and urban removal.

But Snyder goes on to conclude that, "this heightened visibility of gay people in the world of work goes a long way in creating mainstream credibility, which by the way is essential in order to reach the long-term goal of sexual orientation simply being a non-issue." Again, mainstream credibility is assumed to be the end goal, followed by sexuality becoming a "non-issue." But wait—whose goals are those? Oh, the corporations where these nice gays work. I love this synchronicity!

But one of the most perplexing lines in this piece is when Snyder declares that the presence of corporate gay drones is "a contemporary anecdote for homophobia." What the hell is an "anecdote for homophobia"? Let me try this one, of my own creation: "Well, I was hanging out by the copy machine when that new employee with the paisley tie and those Brooks Brothers suits that always look a little *too* freshly pressed, plus Gucci loafers—I mean, who wears Gucci loafers at Halliburton? Maybe Ferragamo, but Gucci, really! Anyway, I noticed his wedding ring was braided platinum—I mean, how gay is that?"

OK, I'm imagining that the editors over at Huffington Post were a little harried on the evening of July 16, because I'm guessing that Snyder means antidote, not anecdote (or, perhaps bloggers at Huffington

Post are not edited—I'm not sure). But even if Snyder does mean "antidote," he's already stated that, although a Gallup poll finds that 90 percent of so-called "Americans" don't think you should be fired if you're gay, 47 percent of those same people don't think muffdiving and cocksucking are morally acceptable. Sounds like homophobia is alive and well!

But get this... Snyder tells us that "out-of-the-closet gay executives in companies like Deloitte, Disney and Morgan Stanley are managing employees who report significantly higher levels of job engagement, satisfaction and morale than employees of straight managers in other environments." Isn't that so cute? Singing show tunes and organizing potlucks have really paid off for the corporate gays—they keep their employees in line by entertaining them! That's right, if you do the can-can right, your employees don't even notice that they're indentured servants. As Snyder says, "Inclusion as it turns out is good for the bottom line." I'm so glad that inclusion isn't cutting into corporate profits—oh, the thought is enough to send me out for another Grey Goose cosmotini, and we both know there's more work to do first, Mary...I mean Walt!

But the best part is yet to come... there's apparently a group called G Suite. That's right, "A play on the business term C-Suite designating chief officer positions, the G Suite is an ever-growing collection of high-level gay corporate executives, wealthy philanthropists and select political types working together (rather stealth-like up until this point it seems) toward a common objective: helping to place the first out-of-the-closet CEO at the helm of a major Fortune 500 company." No, really—like the Masons? Break open the bubbly, Babs, this is certainly the dawning of a new era...

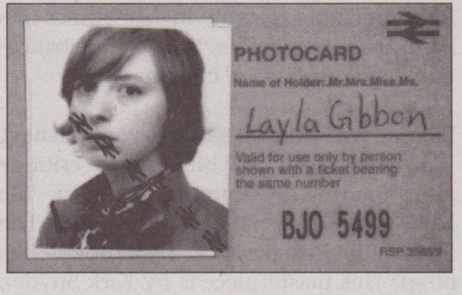
And then another slip on the part of Snyder (I just love these slips!), who declares that "the road to anti-gay hate crimes, same-sex marriage, and even gay adoption may already be paved." I couldn't agree more that the existence of a corporate gay elite who cares only about their own success (oh, and the success of the company!) furthers anti-queer violence, but somehow I think Snyder meant to write "the road to gay inclusion in hate crimes legislation," not simply the road to more "anti-gay hate crimes."

Snyder concludes his compelling piece by stating, "An out-of-the-closet CEO of any blue-chip company will be a watershed day for gay equality. More than likely, all of those other watershed days we've been waiting for will then simply fall into place."

Really? An out-of-the-closet CEO of a blue-chip company will bring the end to US imperialism, corporate bloodshed, global warming, binary gender tyranny, the policing of desire, the dismantling of all nuclear warheads, the end of consumerism... healthcare, housing and food for everyone... the opportunity for everyone to create their gender, sexual, social and political identities and dismantle all systems of oppression at the same time... self-determination for all children, an end to police, the liberation of public space, the end of hierarchies based on identity, and a new way of looking at the world—all of that will simply fall into place?

Thank you, Disney!

Check out my new anthology, *Nobody Passes: Rejecting the Rules of Gender and Conformity*, and tell me what you think! You can also check in on me via my blog, nobodypasses.blogspot.com. The expanded second edition of *That's Revolting! Queer Strategies for Resisting Assimilation* has been delayed once again—who knows when it will appear. But my new novel, *So Many Ways to Sleep Badly* will be published by City Lights in Fall/Winter 2008! I live for feedback, so send me love letters and/or delicious threats via www.mattbernsteinsycamore.com, which includes past MRR columns (and soon it will be updated to the present!). Or you can write to me at 537 Jones Street, #3152, San Francisco, CA 94102.



1) I made someone tell me who died in Harry Potter even though I have not read any of the books or watched any of the films and have no intention of doing so. It made no sense to me obviously, as I have no idea who any of the characters are and it ended up just annoying me. Why did I care about such a piece of meaningless (to me) information? I think the curse of the age is too much mindless information and ephemera. I am sure many irritating liberal columnists have said this before, but seriously when more people care about who dies in Harry Potter than the death count in Iraq it would seem to indicate a certain moral collapse. End times for sure!

2) I have been reading two books by Mike Davis that kind of tie in with this, um, apocalyptic vision. One is called *Planet of Slums*, and is about the new super-cities built on sewage and out of the discards of capitalism that are emerging as people in the so-called third world move to large industrial cities from rural areas but find they do not have the means or power to fit in with the way those cities work. The other one is a collection of essays Davis edited called *Evil Paradise: Dreamworlds of Neoliberalism*. The "evil paradises" are free market utopias built on the unspoken reality of slave labor and robber baron slash-and-burn capitalism. These places are created by the super-rich in places like Dubai and Orange County—gated communities and private cities, which are kind of like the flip side of the super-city coin. The inhabitants of super-cities are living in the economic *and* literal trash created by those living in "dreamland," where you can only walk the streets if you are economically viable (i.e. oil-rich/media-rich, etc.)

In Davis' hellish vision of Dubai, the divide between the haves and the have-nots seems almost medieval in its brutality and immorality. Huge cartoonish buildings and man-made mega-islands built with oil money and the aforementioned slave labor shield the ultra-rich from the indignities of having to pay taxes or in some cases serve time in the countries from which they came. Rebecca Shoenkopf's *Orange County* is a little less feudal, and makes for a much lighter read though she still, albeit mockingly, covers the disparities between the inland barrios of Santa Ana and the coastal gated communities of Laguna Canyon. The Gated McMansion-residing ladies buy their over-saturated offspring Mercedes convertibles to stave off their baby-bird-like insatiable hunger and empty rage; It reads like an even more soulless *Less Than Zero*. There are other chapters about faux California-style gated communities in Hong Kong and Cairo and even in Iran's desert, so perhaps that will be America's legacy rather than Bush's promised democracy in the Middle East. I am envisioning the free market as a stream of vomit—constant—and unless you have a boat, you are stuck swimming in the slop. I can't explain it really.

3) Summer in San Francisco never quite feels like how I imagine summer to be. The culmination of summers past and the mythologies of the idea of summer as being *all freedom and adventure all the time* leave grown-up summers with a lot to live up to. After school, unless you are a trust-fund type that doesn't have to work (or maybe a crusty?) summer is only really distinguished from the rest of the year by the weather. Well maybe I am being a little harsh. I live in California, which only has two seasons really, and San Francisco pretty much doesn't have summer at all, until fall, depending on the day. Thusly I have decided that summer is just an idea and that I have to make *freedom and adventure all the time* happen myself. A couple of days ago Jess and Holly and I drove to Stinson Beach and watched tourists gamboling in the water oblivious to the sign asserting that there had been great white shark attacks there in less than six feet of water… The perfect way to end your California vacation! On the way home we drove over the Golden Gate Bridge listening to Rock Bottom and the Spies' *Rich Girl* and The Dils' *Sound of the Rain,* total mix-tape magic, and we got to avoid the zillion-dollar bridge toll because there were three of us. It felt totally triumphant somehow and I made a remark along the lines of "the punks win for once!" which triggered a discussion about how neither Jess nor Holly consider themselves to be punk anymore. I actually did not participate in this discussion because I am and will always be a punk.

But it also made me think about a conversation I had with Sharon Cheslow about why she plays noise, at a very summery East Bay BBQ. She talked about being an older woman in underground music and the dilemmas and conflicts of art and a wider audience and basement shows and art gallery shows and so on and so forth…and the whole DUDE THING; contre le sexisme! It made me wish I had a tape player because I totally have wanted to interview Sharon for this zine for the longest time, about DC punk histories yes but also about growing old and staying true, staying independent and committed to the underground. You know there is a Chalk Circle Myspace now? She made it and it enabled her to get back in touch with two of the other members; pretty fucking cool! Chalk Circle was one of the few harDCore bands with ladies in it, although really I guess they are more arty lady punk than harDCore, like say, um, the Teen Idles? I am sure Sharon does not consider herself punk anymore, though she still plays her art-damage destruction in basements with punk bands and I totally think she's a punk. Punk is like summer in San Francisco. It's a possibility, and an idea, an ideology maybe, or just a moment of mix-tape transcendence.

Punk is a youth subculture for sure, I know this, but I for one would not still consider myself a punk if I considered punk to be only represented by kids at Gilman or the mall punk's Blanks 77 back patches and sugary mohawk hairstyles. I think that's one of the problems I have with the hero worship of Japanese bands by kids here; if those bands existed here they would be corny mohawk studded-jacket style rock stars. Underground punk is and will always be DIY and independent culture—the idea that the bands are essentially the same as the audience. Not fifty-dollar shows. It's so weird to me that they are so obsessed with Discharge aesthetically, but not by the values or politics—*just the music, sound, and clothing*! How is that punk? Probably a million skinny-jeans clad dudes are rolling their eyes in disgust at this paragraph. I know I am definitely not an expert on Japanese punk culture—please write me and correct me on my cultural ignorance. Don't be mean, though!

4) I went to see Sonic Youth do *Daydream Nation*. It was like watching a play or being in church—the audience was so reverent and the band was so mock-solemn. Kim looked so rad dancing in a mod striped dress against a tie-dye light show—go Berkeley community theatre! It was kind of dreamy but also kind of wrong! I hate the indie rock crowd, so depressing and easily sated. I like that era of Sonic Youth; scary Death Valley Manson girls/Pettibon doom doom dooom time! Bad Moon Rising! A comment on the end of the summer of love…I wanted to see the Melvins perform "Lysol" tonight *so badly!* It's weird how the 90s are being reconstructed right now in mainstream "indie" culture; Dinosaur Jr., Slint, Melvins, Sonic Youth—though I guess it's more late 80s, early 90s. The Pitchfork crowd needs their reconstructed war re-enactments! I wonder if it's like the baby boomer freakout in the 80s when every movie had baby-boomered music. Think about it—*The Big Chill, The Outsiders, Stand By Me*—revivalists! That is happening now, but with bands performing entire LPs. It's like a play because if you saw the Melvins in '89 or whatever they wouldn't "do" the whole of *Gluey Porch Treatments*, or Slint wouldn't "do" the whole of *Spiderland*. They would just play a show; it's total theatre constructionisms. Speaking of which, Mike Mckee is writing a book about 90s DIY hardcore ('91-'94) I am sure he is looking for contributions; if you have any check out his Myspace; his name on there is "90's DIY."

5) I was a teenage straight-edge warrior! I'm not anymore! But I still hate it that hanging out in bars is most people's idea of entertainment. BOOOORING.

6) I have mostly been listening to Leonard Cohen because of seeing McCabe and Mrs. Miller for the first time. I guess that's not very punk. I think about punk a lot and am sorry if I talk about the same thing every month!

7) That's about it! A bunch of random stuff not very coherently discussed!

Why do so many good bands break up so quickly these days? Every few months, an amazing band comes along and sets my head to spinning, then just as quickly they are gone—even if they had real momentum and a growing number of people getting into them and a sound that kept getting better every show. Why has the idea of being serious about playing music—being serious about being in a band and putting all of your heart and soul and energy into it—become such anathema in the modern punk scene?

Is it a hipster thing, a "Whatever, I don't give a fuck about anything" attitude? Is it a product of a post-post-Nirvana environment where people who make music—either as passionate amateur punks on a mission or more intense musician-y types who "live to rock"—have so thoroughly internalized the idea that a modicum of hard-earned musical proficiency or success is just *evil* that they deliberately sabotage anything they are involved in before it comes to fruition? Or

are people just more isolated and self-absorbed now, trained from a young age that relationships of all types are more easily ended and replaced than worked on when things grow a little complicated?

I think it is a combo of all these things, but heavily weighted towards the last one: we really have become more selfish as a culture, more inclined to think of the people we enter into relationships with (musical, romantic, business, friendships, etc.) as disposable. Furthermore, we can prepare our drive-by relationship victims by cloaking our emotions in all the modern posi-speak we want, quoting from *The Ethical Slut* or *Days of War/Nights of Love* and naming all the fine bands in the 30-plus-year-old punk tradition that imploded before they really began. But what we are ultimately talking about here is the innately selfish concept that we are entitled to drop any personal relationship we want at will, sans consequences or any attempt at reconciliation, as long as we enter into it with some kind of disclaimer.

The thing is, relationships change as they grow whether we want them to or not; the way one feels in the very beginning of a relationship might not be how they feel at the end, and to not take that into account when ending a relationship with a(n)other person(s) is potentially fucking them over—and as some wise punks have said before, *you don't have to fuck people over to survive*.

I have to make some disclaimers of my own here, before any *assumptions* are made. I am in a perfectly happy, long-term romantic relationship with a wonderful person who I have good communication with, and who is willing to work together with our problems to make them better. I am in two bands—one nearing the end of its long run but which worked hard to make our vision a reality and to stay together until it's no longer feasible, and another new band that is starting out with a similar attitude. My longer-lasting friendships are the same. So this is not a rant of a jilted lover or friend or bandmate; if anything, I have been on the opposite side of that coin a few times and have felt the unease of the one doing the jilting and had some dulled awareness of the pain being caused. I have been guilty of being the bully probably more often than I have been the mark, whether I was fully aware of the situation or not.

Still, much of this column is based on outside observation rather than introspection. I see punks I like (often over the age of 25) acting like clueless hippies as they pursue love while mired in a false innocence, a calculated naiveté that they know is a bunch of bullshit as they break hearts and ruin other young(ish) minds in their quest for a good screw. It's just that there are so many people around, particularly in cities and/or if you are the train-hoppin' town-skippin' type, that there will always be another person around who didn't hear about how badly you fucked the last person over. I am far from a prude, and definitely don't harbor Christian-based morals about monogamy, but just declaring oneself "non-monogamous" does not give you carte blanche to act like an asshole. People are not disposable, and relationships take work to survive; if you are a somewhat intelligent weirdo (as most punks are) this is likely to be doubly so due to idiosyncratic tastes and various neuroses. Something to keep in mind: This attitude of lovers being disposable is shared with the grossest-of-the-gross, *Cosmopolitan*-reading "normal" jerks—I seem to recall being in the front room while my roommates were watching *Sex in the City* (ironically?) and seeing a scene where a fashionable *Cosmo* yuppie lady immediately dumps her boyfriend of a year because he once left the bathroom door open while taking a shit. Could she have asked him to maybe keep the door closed? Why bother? That would involve something approximating *work*.

This relationship-as-work concept applies to bands. I know, I know, you stick by your statement that all the best musicians and bands imploded while young and/or talentless and only recorded two 7"s, blah blah blah, but the truth is that unless you are a fat dude with glasses in your mid-40s with three spare rooms full of vinyl you will only be able to name one or two bands who followed that model. Most of the bands you—and I—really like a lot and genuinely admire were filled with people who *worked their asses off and gave a fuck about what they were doing*. I don't even have to name the damn bands, because it is pretty much ever band you have ever heard of. Yes, bad bands you have heard of often work extra hard—that's part of why they are famous. Get over it. That should just give you more reason to get a fire under your ass to do what you are doing, especially if you have something to say and some genuine passion to say it with.

There is nothing wrong with ambition when it is in the service of promoting a worthwhile idea. That worthwhile idea could be your music. You will just have to work your ass off; read Michael Azerrad's book *Our Band Could Be Your Life* for further reference. If you are decent, try to stick around at least long enough to put out two or three albums and grow artistically. Punk bands before Nirvana weren't so torn up about having a mission and being serious about their noise. Since Nirvana came around and made everyone feel bad about saying anything but "whatever" and then whining about it in their music, musicians (even those who hate Nirvana) are constantly second-guessing themselves. This is stupid. Kurt Cobain was one of the most ambitious musicians that ever lived, and he was also a big fat junkie and liar. Whatever you think about his music, you shouldn't let his highly publicized neurotic bullshit drag you down and make you feel uncool for giving a fuck and working to get yourself out there. Since I'm not old enough to really remember punk before Nirvana "changed everything," I had to wrangle with vestiges of that dumb attitude for years, and lemme tell ya…it can seriously fuck with having an artistic vision and carrying it to term.

But I digress—the point is that a band is a relationship, and a really complicated one with multiple people that ain't gonna be hunky-dory all the time. If you are a musician who is candidly serious about what you have to say and what you are doing, you will be called cheesy by the very large number of people I am targeting in the preceding paragraphs. You are also, however, going to attract people who feel similarly and are more likely to try and work through problems to reach new levels of communication, rather than simply dropping the whole thing and running to go start it over with someone else.

Who knows—you might create something truly compelling, or you might fail completely, but at least you tried. At least you gave enough of a fuck to actually try something and put the work into it to maybe give it a chance to happen. Don't you at least owe that much to the people you knowingly enter into relationships with in life? If you don't think so, then please do me a favor and stay as far the fuck away from me as possible. I don't like to waste my time.

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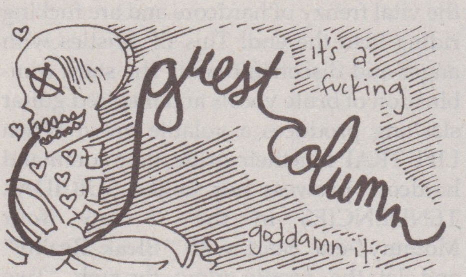
An archive of NO columns is online at www.myspace.com/noarchive.



Punx Is Gentrifiers

Breaking it down and getting a clue about your role in displacing others.

By Michelle Zenarosa

So you wanna start an infoshop? DIY space? Punk haus? Or maybe you just want to instigate "punk night" at the local dive bar? Well, let's trace the usual steps taken to make this happen…

You probably don't have much money, so you look towards an area that you can afford. You have found a sweet spot, close to all the local hotspots, and you fill out an application to rent. You look like a much better renter than the people who rented before you and the landlord doesn't seem to care one way or another, so s/he hands you a lease and you couldn't be more excited about how promising your new life is looking.

Fast forward a little bit. It's a warm night in town and you're out on the rooftop reflecting on what has happened since you set up shop. Suddenly you realize how much has changed in such a short time: a whole new set of affluent faces have moved into the neighborhood. A new yoga studio, an art gallery and an upscale pet boutique have even staked their territory down the street.

What has happened isn't some new trend—it's called gentrification. The European Commission's building design and construction program describes it in more definite terms as the "unit-by-unit acquisition of the housing of low income residents, industrial or commercial property by high-income residents for art, cultural, fashion, or other high-status use."

Contrary to popular belief, gentrification it is not a normal market phenomenon. Displacement means force. It entails harassment and violence, especially of tenants. By initiating and/or contributing to gentrification, you create the potential for landlords to displace tenants.

The main problem with gentrification is displacement, but that's not the only consequence. When poor residents get displaced it's nearly impossible for them to find adequate housing because of the reduction in cheaper housing stock and the nonexistent attempt to re-house them in the richer suburbs.

Gentrification, in one form or another, has been displacing indigenous people for hundreds of years. There is a long, complex history of white folks claiming land as theirs whenever they see it fitting to their desires, profit and convenience. And it isn't unique to just your region, it's a dangerous wave that is happening everywhere and fast. But the good news is that it doesn't necessarily mean it's the beginning of the end.

What You Need Is A Little R&R

No folks, I'm not talking about rest and relaxation. I'm talking about Responsibility & Resistance. The first step to countering the gentrification movement is taking responsibility. "But it's not my fault," you say? Regardless of the intention, the reality is that when gentrification occurs, even your mere presence contributes to the displacement of the indigenous residents—not to mention the destruction of the spirit of the existing community. Just because you don't have a working relationship with corporate scum developers, doesn't mean you aren't an active participant in gentrifying a neighborhood. Complacency and taking advantage of a poorer neighborhood at the expense of its residents is just as bad!

But don't get discouraged—that doesn't necessarily mean you have to move out ASAP. There are ways you can consciously resist becoming a gentrifier while continuing to live in the neighborhood you live in.

Turning Intention Into Action

Once you become aware of and accept your role in gentrifying a neighborhood and decide you want to do something about it, there is a vast number of ways you can prevent or at least minimize displacement.

Even though it might seem like you are fighting a huge invisible monster, don't let it make you feel like you are powerless. There are concrete ways to combat gentrification before the wave hits. But it's going to take some work. Here are some suggestions:

- *Determine the needs of the community.* Use your DIY skills and flier! Hold a town forum and invite everyone to discuss options, concerns and needs.
- *Identify potential areas of contention.* This means properties like run-down, dilapidated or abandoned buildings that are usually deemed undesirable land. Developers often wait until these properties are dirt-cheap so they can buy it and re-develop as expensive luxury condos. Other properties to look out for also include the other side of the spectrum: buildings being bought-out by large chains. If a Borders or Barnes & Noble is looking to buy out the local bookstore, organize to resist that change from occurring. Making sure native businesses can continue to afford rent in the neighborhood is another key part to the puzzle.
- *Contact local government.* After the community knows what it wants (i.e. community garden, recreation center, low-income housing) and there is available land, let your city council members know what's going on and steer them in the direction of the community.
- *Brainstorm for financing strategies.* Build alliances with nonprofit organizations, potential investors, and even landlords or private developers to create proactive financing tactics.
- *Work with existing development proposals.* If it looks like that huge condo complex is going to happen, try to minimize displacement by making sure that local government sets aside a percentage of the development for affordable housing, living wage jobs, parking and/or open space. You can even negotiate for monetary assistance to local nonprofit community organizations or for implementation of rent control policies.

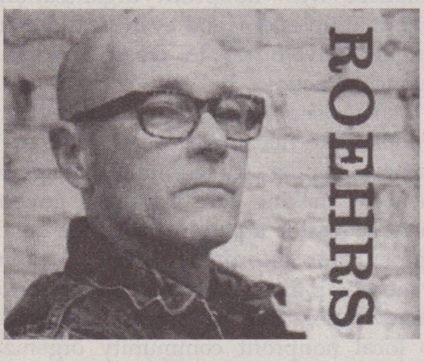
And if you're looking for less-intensive ways of resisting, get creative! Don't forget about the neighborhood you live in when you're arranging the next event at your house or infoshop. When you are consistently bringing outsiders into the mix and isolating yourselves from the actual community you are in, you are contributing to gentrification. Instead of having that political prisoner-writing event, maybe one night you can hold a puppet-making workshop for the neighborhood kids and have a parade or puppet show for the community. Or perhaps for the next vegan potluck you hold at your house, you can invite your neighbors too. The best way to counter gentrification is to keep the life and bonds of the existing community strong and alive. Instead of conflicting with one another, reinforce each other.

Of course every community has its own specific needs and unique cultural vitality and these are just some ways to approach gentrification and best time to start organizing is at the beginning of it.

The Revolution Is LOCAL

…And it needs to happen now, in our

neighborhoods. There's obviously more than one way to gentrify a neighborhood and punks aren't always the catalysts. But it's classic for a structure like an infoshop or a punk-affiliated cafe to be the first sign of imminent gentrification. Nevertheless, punks can and do have the means to break the cycle. After your neighborhood gets gentrified and you are priced out, think again before helping to gentrify yet another neighborhood. Now that you have the knowledge, don't let it happen again. Make responsible and well thought-out decisions to make sure you can do the most to secure the community you will move into next. There is absolutely no reason why people who have worked so hard to build their lives and improve their neighborhoods should not be able to stay there!



Killing for Fun

Fuck! Grave Mistake Records has dropped two unruly seven-inch records on you punks and skins!

First, you get WASTED TIME with their raucous *No Shore* EP. This blistering fast punk rock EP starts off with "Hostage." This song is a brain-altering blast of relentless thrash damage! The guitars boil alongside the urgent vocals, creating a tense atmosphere. You do not get a chance to recover your composure. "Leech/No Shore" comes rollicking out of the speakers intent on beating you down. On "Hey Pat," song three, you get abused once more with severe guitar stabs and full vocal mayhem. Fucking excellent!

Side B of the new WASTED TIME hardcore assault starts with "And So It Goes." Don't let the melodic introduction lull you into letting your defenses down. After the deceptive punk intro, you get slammed again! You punks and skins get no reprieve! "Ritual" fucking crashes directly into "Same Story." Holy fuck!

WASTED TIME reduces you delicate little punks to a quivering mass! Fucking scrape your ass off the floor and go get this storming new *No Shore* EP!!!

The next dose of raw testosterone from Grave Mistake Records is GOVERNMENT WARNING on their new *Arrested* EP. GOVERNMENT WARNING starts off with a shitload of punk momentum on the title track, "Arrested." These speed-core hellions establish a massive guitar, bass, drum surge to compliment the madman vocals provided by KB!

Song two on side A is "Maniacs"—a fifty-eight second blast of youthful bile! Side B starts with a fast and furious punk melee called "Killing for Fun." The high-pitched vocals and possessed-by-Satan guitar playing push this tune into the red!

The final song on this hardcore debacle is "Safe and Sound." This song will leave you feeling most uneasy! GOVERNMENT WARNING is doing their job—the listening public is visibly uncomfortable! Get off your ass and order the WASTED TIME *No Shore* EP and the GOVERNMENT WARNING *Arrested* EP from Grave Mistake Records, PO Box 12482, Richmond, VA 23241; GraveMistakeRecords.com.

Fuck yes!!! The illustrious No Way Record label has the fucking punk-rock junk for you this month! Two more violent slabs of polyvinyl chloride!

To start the brawl you get four young punks with no redeeming social value, DESTROY L.A. This crew attacks immediately with their song, "Your Grave." From the first three notes you realize you're screwed! These snotty punk bastards don't give a shit about you fashion punks! This thrashy mess is dripping with old-school attitude and complete disregard for your sensitive feelings! The arrogant vocals on the DESTROY L.A. *Vandalize* EP fit perfectly with the well-played 1981-style guitar bashing. These shit-disturbers run through two more obnoxious thrash numbers on side A. Listen to "Losing My Mind"—you get the queasy feeling that this singer might snap at any moment! "Bad Habits" finishes off side A. Side B begins with "Waste of Life." This song pays homage to the halcyon days of the CIRCLE JERKS and BLACK FLAG. "Step It Up" gets you off the barstool with your fist in the air! The title cut of the DESTROY L.A. EP, "Vandalize," wraps this fucker up in fine style! The guitars twist and turn, the vocals get under your skin and cause problems! This is shitty punk for sick fucks! Get yours now!

On the second new EP on No Way Records, Brandon and Lauren present you with the motherfucking guns! LIFE TRAP crashes out of the chute with their *Bleak Reality* EP!!! These punks have harnessed the vital frenzy of hardcore and are fucking riding it to the end! This EP bristles with anger and discontentment! The stark combination of brute vocals and inspired guitar slashing produces a volatile brew! When LIFE TRAP hits their stride, they command hardcore prowess not unlike SUICIDAL TENDENCIES in the "I Saw Your Mommy"-era. Start with "Bleak Reality" and let the needle plow through "Two Face," "Worthless" and "Suburban Nightmare." Every fucking song holds you by the throat until LIFE TRAP hears a death rattle!

Side B hammers you with "Lost Cause." The metal guitar riff will tear your fucking face off! "D.O.B." continues the merciless bludgeoning on your bruised head. Song three, "Society's Noose," puts the icing on the corpse—you are fucking history! You need to order these two No Way Records immediately! Contact DESTROY L.A. at destruktionl@yahoo.com. Contact LIFE TRAP at colinlewissucks@hotmail.com.

Fuck! ANTiSEEN, the titans of Scum Rock, came to California and laid waste to the hippie enclaves! ANTiSEEN played three well-received shows in Southern California to honor the tenth anniversary of TKO Records. ANTiSEEN brought their fierce brand of rock 'n' roll carnage to San Francisco for one beautiful bloodbath! Fuck yes! During ANTiSEEN's 25-year mission as Badwill Ambassadors, they have only played California three times! The recent visit gives one hope that the politically correct pinheads of the Bay Area finally get it! The show at Thee Parkside was packed with American Scum-Rock neer-do-wells, celebrating what they have known all along—ANTiSEEN are the reigning kings of rock 'n' roll! This shit is not all gussied up for you hipster punks! This is meat and potatoes rock and roll, warts and all! No apologies are offered here! This is ferocious rock and roll straight out of the hills! The fucking hairs on your neck stand straight up under these dangerous conditions!! The term "dangerous" means rock 'n' roll. Refer to Mr. Jerry Lee Lewis, one of the creators. Mr. Lewis has lived his whole life on the edge of society. ANTiSEEN resides in the same sparsely inhabited territory.

ANTiSEEN destroyed the Golden State! Read this goddamn set list: "Queen City Stomp;" "Alpha Male;" "Thanks-a-Lot" (ERNEST TUBB); "Haunted House;" "Animals—Eat 'Em;" "Funk-U;" "I Don't Ask You for Nothin';" "OD for Me;" "Commando" (RAMONES); "Trooper;" "Star Whore;" and a great "Fix Me"

(BLACK FLAG)! Fuck yes!

With local Confederacy of Scum heroes HAMMERLOCK pulverizing the hard-bitten rock and roll crowd as an opener—it was a night to remember! Long live ANTiSEEN. And HAMMERLOCK.

Fucking A!!! Those powerful skins and punks from DC, 86 MENTALITY, came to bomb California! From Bakersfield to Gilman Street, these hard rocking fucks destroyed all that was in their path! These men brought a vicious type of authentic East Coast hardcore to you punks and skins! SET TO EXPLODE, also from the DC area, was scheduled to open the show but could not make it. Dave, the singer of SET TO EXPLODE, did come out with 86 MENTALITY and with their help ripped through one SET TO EXPLODE song. Fucking great!!!

86 MENTALITY proceeded to storm the fucking club with a live set that included some of their most popular hardcore numbers. The crowd received songs such as: "Intro/Life Trap;" "Terror Boys;" "Get Away;" "Escape;" "Final Exit;" "86 Mentality;" "Violent Night;" "Blood Red Violence;" "Chemical Threat;" and "Fall in Line." Fuck yes!

You can get both 86 MENTALITY EPs, plus some unreleased stuff on the *Goin' Nowhere Fast* CD. To order your 86 MENTALITY, WASTED TIME, DEEP SLEEP, or GOVERNMENT WARNING product, contact the esteemed Grave Mistake Records at PO Box 12482, Richmond, VA 23241 or at GraveMistakeRecords.com.

Until next month—see you fucks at the bar!

It was not long before my fourth birthday when my family—my mother, my father, and I—left Iran for the first and last time in my young life. It was 1985, and my parents had been trying to find a way out of the country from the day I was born. The Islamic turn in the 1979 revolution left my father, who was an active member of a leftist organization in Tehran, not only anxious about his and his family's well-being—especially as he watched a number of his comrades imprisoned, tortured, or killed—but also politically alienated from the nascent State. The Iran-Iraq war was in its most vicious phase, and one of the few vivid memories I have of life in Tehran is of the nightly panic-fueled escapes to the basement of our apartment building—then doubling as a makeshift bomb shelter—to wait out the terror of bombardment with our fellow neighbors. I was too young to have made any sense of what was going on around me, but my mother often describes the sickly strange mixture of sadness, guilt, and relief that came with surviving another day when a block or two over or a family once removed didn't have the same luxury. If life in Iran seemed temporary for my family, it is because everything in that war-beleaguered country did in those years.

People were not being allowed out of Iran during that time but for very specific purposes. My father, an engineer, worked with a company that occasionally sent him out of the country, and on the instance of our flight from Tehran, he managed to secure tickets for my mother and I for a purported week-long family trip to Germany, where his company was to be stationed temporarily. Because we got word only the day before that we might be able to leave, there was very little time to prepare for our departure. My mother managed to finish load of laundry, pack a suitcase, and call her sister to tell her that we were flying out of the country the next day. There wasn't any time for last goodbyes—my mom simply didn't show up for work ever again—and anyway it was just as well for fewer people to know that we were attempting to flee the country for good. We took nothing that could reveal our intentions not to return to Iran—just a few changes of clothes, some small toys for me, and some toiletries—but this didn't stop the revolutionary guards stationed at the airport from inspecting every last thing in our bags. One took my mother's jar of moisturizer, stuck his dirty pen in it, and twirled it around looking for hidden jewelry; when he handed the jar back to my mother, she had to resist the urge to throw it back in his face. We left behind not only our lives, but also everything that was a record of who we were: photographs, old letters, my grandfather's books, and all of our legal documents (including my birth certificate, a fact that made all our future attempt at gaining legal status in US that much more difficult). Very literally, we left with little more than the clothes on our backs, fearful for the reprisal that would await us if we were found out.

We spent a few months in Germany while my parents attempted to find some way to stay legally anywhere in Europe. Their efforts went unrewarded. With next to no money and no ideas for finding work, and against the initial wishes of my father and his broken Trotskyist heart, they decided to travel to the United States. When we arrived, it was not at all certain that we would even be allowed into the country, but somehow we were let through customs, where we were greeted by an older American couple—the Shimwells—who my mother had lived with for some months as a high school exchange student. The Shimwells lived in a tiny house in a working class town in upstate New York, and that is where we stayed on their largesse for the better part of a year, simultaneously attempting to gain status, find work, and duck *la migra* all the while.

It took quite some time before we were able to achieve legal status in the US. I'll spare you details, because they are difficult, sad, and banal all at once; literally too many out-of-status immigrants to count have struggled in the US as we did—against INS, against poverty, against joblessness, against racism—and the fact is that because we managed to get our papers in order in the end, we were among the lucky ones. I will tell one story, though, that happened near the end of our journey. My parents and I were in the office of the INS agent in charge of our case—a case that was at that point seemingly running out of hope. We had filed for political asylum, and were discussing our options with the INS lackey, when he turned our paperwork over and told my parents "off the record" that his agency would look favorably upon our application if my parents and I converted to Christianity. To this day, I am not sure whether that INS agent had any real authority to give us that very illegal and totally degrading advice—I mean, who knows if he was a lone missionary or if he was actually trying to be practical about our chances of staying in the US—but sure enough my mother desperately convinced my father that she and I should make the false conversion. So, we were baptized and went to church services, and I was sent off to Bible school for the next year or so. My father himself refused the conversion—his commitment to atheism being his most adamant principled stance—but in any case our status as resident aliens was finally approved.

* * *

I don't usually like telling the story of how my family came to this country. I feel

strangely protective of our experience, because after all it is *mine*, and because even well-meaning listeners make me feel like I am turning my story and that of my family into currency in exchange for some kind of culture points, like the equivalent of all of those "ethnic" trinket stores come to life. Another way of looking at it: this shit is not a fucking party anecdote meant to amaze or amuse. I can't tell you how many clueless people have asked me inane, intrusive questions about my life or about Iranian politics just moments after learning my name. It is one thing to share these most intimate details of my life with others who have gone through similar experiences, but to tell them to just anyone makes me feel like I am exploiting myself and my people, playing native informer for a bankrupt culture ravenous for "authentic" experiences. This is the reality of my fucking my life and the root of a lot of sadness, alienation, and anger for me. It is not a statistic, not something to use to prove a point, and not something to engender a feeling of liberal compassion or munificence. But then, there is something sad about not telling anyone at all; either way, something is lost.

* * *

The Iranian diaspora in this country shares a dubious distinction with some other post-revolutionary immigrant communities—and I am thinking of Cuban emigrés in particular in this regard—in that it is in general significantly more politically conservative than many other immigrants in the US. A lot wealthy Iranians who lived off of the decadence of Shah's regime fled the country when the nascent Islamic regime started making good on their promise that enemy heads would roll, and a lot of those barnacles living off of the decadence of the *ancién regime* found their way to this country. Neither wealthy nor resembling anything close to monarchists (nor supporting false US rhetoric about "liberating" Iran) this meant that my parents and I—already living in exile in a hostile country—have experienced deep alienation from even those who are supposed to be "our people." So that every time someone shouted at us to "speak English or go back to where you come from," or taunted me as a little kid for mixing up words, eating weird food, and speaking an inscrutable language, or didn't hire my dad because of the thickness of his accent, or confided in one of us that we weren't like "other Arabs" (sic), we really had only each other to fall back on. So for what it's worth, I'd like to dedicate this column to them with love and admiration, because not only did they give up literally everything they had and knew so that I could be a commie punk fag without (quite as much) fear of reprisal, but they were also the first people to teach me that it was alright to embrace rather than run away from the perpetual alienation of living in a state of exile. Because exile, while never a comfortable state of existence, is in its way the most fruitful place of all to try to see the false mythos of any ideology, and from which to try to knock it down.

* * *

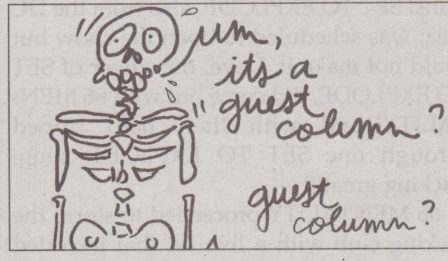
Enjoy the rest of the immigration issue of *Maximum*. This migrapunk section of this issue was compiled by Jane G. and Esneider over the course of a few months comprised of exchanged emails, meetings with me for Indian food in Jackson Heights, and untold hours and hours of hard work. I'd like to take this space to thank them for graciously dealing with my flaky ass as well as *MRR*'s relentless deadlines, and for the quality of their amazing work.

* * *

Golnar / 419 Hancock St. #4 / Brooklyn, NY 11216
golnar@maximumrocknroll.com

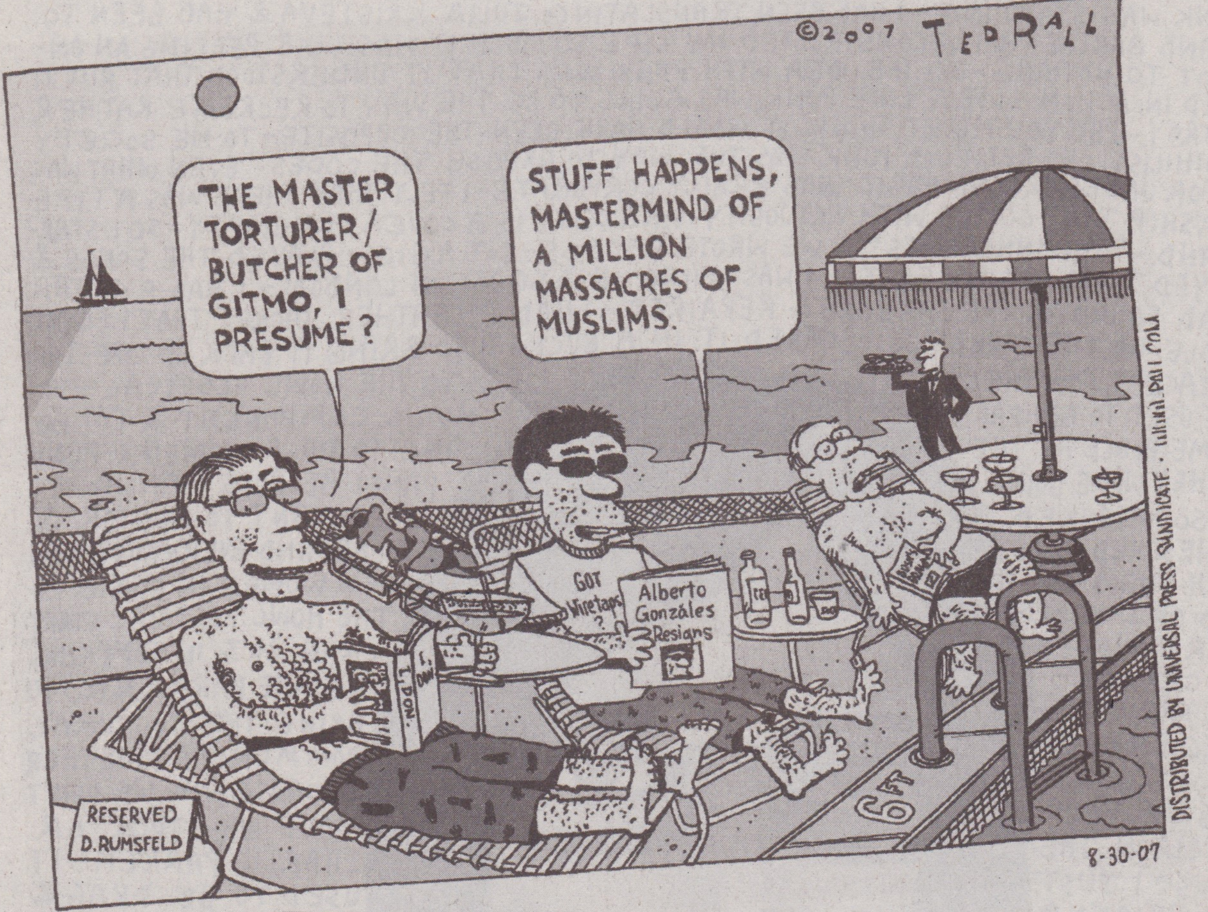
Much thanks is due to Jane and Esneider for soliciting, translating, and compiling this month's immigration content, and Golnar as well for both massive editing assistance and in general help coordinating the immigration section over the last few months while I was working on the previous couple issues. We will continue running immigration-themed articles on a regular basis in the future, so long as you continue to send us your stories. Next month's issue will feature the second half of the Sandro piece, and if you want to lend your voice, write: migrapunk@gmail.com

On another note, I am glad (make that super-extra thrilled) to announce that our exhaustive search has finally yielded not one, but two excellent potential future coordinators! First, current Austin, TX resident Cissie Scurlock will be flying halfway across the country next week to start learning the ropes here at *Maximum*. Second, much beloved shitworker Justin Briggs has offered to take on a more significant role running the magazine as well. Employing three content coordinators is not completely unprecedented, but it remains to be seen how everything will come together over the next couple issues. Regardless, I can't overstate how much I'm looking forward to collaborating with my two new partners in crime, and have no doubt the magazine will benefit greatly from their input. And maybe I will once and for all be able to catch up on all my email...



I review records for *Maximum Rocknroll*. They ask you to send in two copies. When you do send two, I can take one home, listen to it for awhile, have it play as both background and foreground music, and really think about what I'm going to write. It's important for me to get this right because so many stores, distros, and folks depend on *MRR* as their one source for international hardcore information, and with the magazine's longevity, it's really a historical record of the output of the DIY punk, garage, and hardcore scenes. It's still the biggest independent DIY punk and hardcore fanzine in the world. When you don't send two copies, I have to listen to it at MRR, as they have to keep the one copy there for people's Top Tens and the radio show.

There's always people at MRR, usually people I haven't seen in a few months. They want to talk to me while your record is playing. Someone else comes in when I flip it over. It's impossible to concentrate so I just jot a few notes down and maybe write a few sentences describing it—and then you just don't get as high quality (description-wise) of a review. I'm working on a deadline and it's impossible to work with all these people around. I'm just being honest. It's like a friggin' zoo of people when reviews are due, in addition to bands staying at the house, shitworkers, and other random folks. You, the label or band, should really spend the extra couple of bucks to ensure you get the best review possible, I can't guarantee a good review, but you send two copies, you up your chances of at least an attentive one.



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THE MASTER TORTURER/ BUTCHER OF GITMO, I PRESUME?
STUFF HAPPENS, MASTERMIND OF A MILLION MASSACRES OF MUSLIMS.
GOT Wiretaps?
Alberto Gonzáles Resigns
RESERVED D. RUMSFELD
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YOU GUYS KILLED MY KID.
DON'T LOOK AT ME. I WAS JUST FOLLOWING ORDERS.
IT ISN'T THE MILITARY'S FAULT. CONGRESS PICKS THE WARS, NOT US!
WE WERE SIMPLY CARRYING OUT THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE!
IT WAS THE MEDIA. THEY SCARED US INTO WAR!
YEAH!
WE MERELY REPORTED WHAT THE PRESIDENT SAID!
DAILY
THE CIA GAVE ME LOUSY INTELLIGENCE.
SADDAM FAKED US OUT!
C.I.A. MIDDLE EAST DESK
I WAS SCARED THE U.S. WOULD INVADE WITH A BUNCH OF CLOWNS LIKE THAT GUY.
SADDAM
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I RAN AWAY FROM ART SCHOOL IN NEW CASTLE IN 1977 OR 8 TO START A PUNK BAND BECAUSE PUNK WAS STARTING - I HAD BEEN TRANSLATING JULIA KRISTEVA & HAD BEEN TO SEE ROLAND BARTHES & I DECONSTRUCTED MY LIFE SO MUCH IT WAS LIKE PEELING AN ONION & I GOT TO NOTHING - SO THE IDEA WITH PUNK WAS THAT IT UNDERSTOOD THAT BUT IT ALSO LIVED IN ACTION - I FELT LIKE PUNK WAS GOING TO BE THE WAY TO RECREATE RATHER THAN DESTROY - THO YOU MIGHT THINK IT WOULD HAVE BEEN THE OPPOSITE - TO ME SOCIETY WAS SO NIHILISTIC - I BELIEVED PUNK WAS THE WAY TO EXPOSE THE CODES - EVEN WHAT WAS PASSING FOR UNDERGROUND MUSIC WAS REALLY CORPORATE - I FELT THAT THERE WAS A TYPE OF OWNERSHIP THAT COMES WITH VIRTUOSITY - VIRTUOSITY IS A COVER FOR EMPTY - SO I STARTED A BAND - "THE INNOCENTS" & WE WROTE 5 SONGS - GOT A GIG - PLAYED THE SONGS & THEN PLAYED THEM AGAIN - FAST! - I WAS LIVING IN A SQUAT IN LONDON - I HAD A GUITAR THAT I HAD FOUND IN THE GARBAGE & REPAIRED - I HAD A LEATHER JACKET THAT I FOUND IN A PUDDLE IN THE STREET & I SOAKED IT IN A BUCKET TO BRING IT BACK TO LIFE - THAT WAS MY JACKET FOR THE LONGEST TIME - WE USED TO REHEARSE AT THE SAME PLACE AS THE CLASH & THEY WERE GOING ON TOUR - SO WE ASKED THEM IF WE COULD GO ON TOUR WITH THEM - SO THEY SAID OK & CHECKED WITH THIER MANAGER WHO WAS CAROLINE COOM AT THE TIME - AT THE BEGINNING OF THE WEEK WE WOULD BE GOING ON TOUR WITH THE CLASH, THE SLITS & US - I JUST SPOKE TO ARIANNA LAST WEEK & SHE WANTS TO DO "SLITS FEST" - LIKE A STAR TREK CONVENTION BUT EVERYONE COMES LIKE THE SLITS - I HAD CALLED HER BECUZ I WANTED HER TO COME TO THE HOWL FESTIVAL BECUZ I'M ADDING A NEW ELEMENT ☆ - TO THE HOWL FESTIVAL - A MUSIC COMPONENT & I'M GOING TO DO A WOMEN'S PUNK PANEL BECAUSE I THINK ITS IMPORTANT TO MENTOR & TO REMIND EVERYBODY HOW NEW WOMEN IN MUSIC IS - THE HOWL FESTIVAL STARTED IN 2K3 IN TOMPKINS SQUARE PARK (NYC) TO BRING THE CULTURAL COMMUNITY TOGETHER BECAUSE NOW WE DON'T HAVE WIGSTOCK OR CHARLIE PARKER - IT USED TO BE DRAG & JAZZ & LATIN & CHILDRENS SCULPTURE & ART AROUND THE PARK & NOW THERE WILL BE ALL OF THAT PLUS MORE POETRY ("HOWL" IS FOR ALLEN GINSBURG'S FAMOUS POEM) & A SMALL PRESS FAIR, COMICS PANEL & A TRIBUTE TO DAVID WOJNAROWICZ - BUT FIRST I AM HAVING A JEAN GENET PARTY!

Marguerite Van Cook - 08/14/2K7 - Lower East Side NYC

I met Marguerite at a meeting for World War 3 artists probably sometime in the early 90s when I first started going to those meetings - Marguerite is a full on multi-media artist - she had worked with music, film, video, painting, illustration, writing - & probably more! - she is originally from England but has been in the lower east side for so long - she & her partner in crime (the also amazing artist James Romberger) are organizing the Howl Festival this year - check the website www.howlfestival.com

To contact Fly email fly@bway.net (put MRR in the title so I know its not spam!) - Dog Dayz zines #1 & 2 are now available ($5 each pp USA) - PEOP(le)s zine # 2 & 3 also available ($5 each pp USA) - contact Fly PO Box 1318 Cooper Station NYC NY10276

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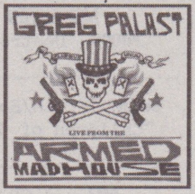

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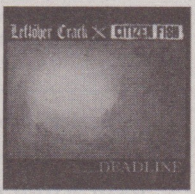

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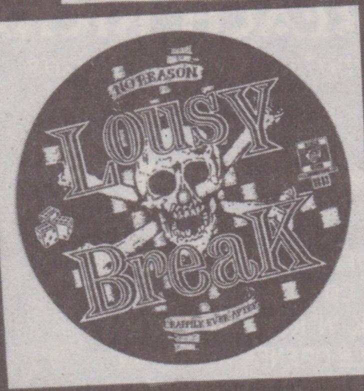

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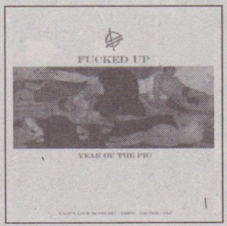

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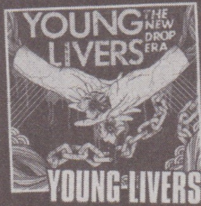

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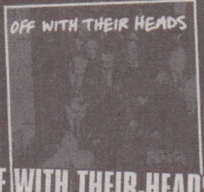

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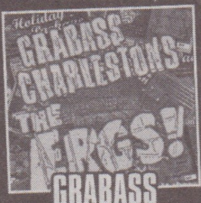

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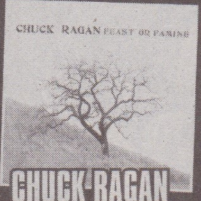

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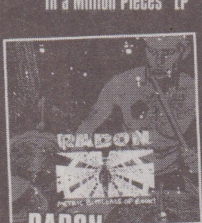

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MRR NEWS

MRR NEWS FOR ISSUE #293 COMPILED BY ARIEL CELESTE

OPPONENTS WADE BACK INTO BATTLE TO PULL PLUG ON SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS

From an article in the SF Chronicle

One contingent in San Francisco is pleased to see public surveillance cameras coming under attack: all those who thought the devices were a terrible idea to begin with. That includes the American Civil Liberties Union, Chinese for Affirmative Action, and more than half a dozen other community groups that have packed city hearings over the past year to oppose the placement of cameras in public places with the intention of deterring crime and catching violent criminals. They smell blood on the issue with the news this week that San Francisco police and the Housing Authority rarely use the devices, and they say they have no intention of backing down.

"Once these cameras go up, it's not clear they will ever come down, which means they will only get more invasive when combined with other emerging technologies," said Mark Schlosberg, police practices policy director for the ACLU's San Francisco office. "I can see no way they will ever be acceptable." Schlosberg said that in a few years, it probably will become possible to combine surveillance cameras with machines that identify people by face-recognition records or that come equipped with speakers so officials who are monitoring video feeds can talk directly to those being watched. "In England, they already have cameras where the monitors can talk to you live on the street, and in a real sense, that is Big Brother in action right now," Schlosberg said. "Obviously, that is not the case in San Francisco, and we have regulations that prevent things like that for the moment. "But the trouble with regulations is that they can be changed. And technology can be added to. That's what we're worried about."

Vincent Pan, executive director of Chinese for Affirmative Action, said that for any person of color, cameras will never be acceptable. The biggest debate over surveillance cameras in San Francisco since they were installed two years ago has concerned their use in the city's predominantly minority housing projects. The 178 cameras there are not monitored in real time, and opponents say they hope they never are.

"Communities of color who historically have been discriminated against for immigration status or the color of their skin can appreciate in particular how warrantless surveillance can cause anxiety," Pan said. "The argument that 'if you've done nothing wrong you don't have to worry' does not apply to certain communities. It's a luxury many communities can't afford." Oakland, a city renowned for its diversity, twice rejected proposals for government-funded surveillance cameras in the late 1990s on the same grounds.

Pan noted that in January, at the most recent city Police Commission hearing that fully aired the camera issue, about half of the capacity crowd favored cameras and half did not. He said he could appreciate the desire of those who feel tyrannized by crime to get any new tools they can to feel safer, but he said there are better uses for the money.

The city has spent about $500,000 to install 70 cameras, and the federally funded Housing Authority paid $200,000 for its cameras. The agency plans to install 81 more cameras but hasn't said when it will do so. "How about using the funds instead to hire more bilingual officers or put in better lighting in dangerous areas?" Pan said. "Those techniques have been shown to be effective. Cameras have not."

No comprehensive studies in San Francisco show that surveillance cameras work or don't work, but the ACLU did a scan of police statistics that showed crime went up in some areas where cameras were used and down in others. The organization concluded that the cameras were ineffective. Studies over the past few years in London, which might have more surveillance cameras than any city on Earth—one for every 13 residents—have shown that the information can be abused in the wrong hands. In some instances, video monitors focused disproportionately on people of color or on women for voyeuristic pleasure.

Schlosberg said the latest video cameras can determine the title of the book a person is reading, the medication written on a bottle label and words on documents that can indicate a person's political leaning. "The bottom line is they are invasive, ineffective at reducing crime and take away dollars from things that are better, such as community policing," he said.

City officials who instituted the camera program—still considered an experimental pilot program by Mayor Gavin Newsom—maintain the devices are not a cure-all for violent crime but that they are clearly a valuable tool. They also point out that other cities, notably Chicago and New York, have embraced the technology and intend to expand it to every street over the next decade. "When people know a camera is focused on an area, generally they don't stand under the cameras and break the law," Police Chief Heather Fong said. "Give it time. I anticipate there will be successes."

Michael Spearman, an international security consultant based in San Francisco, said he doesn't need any study to show the efficiency of cameras. He finds them to be beneficial tools every day in the work he does at Spearman Consulting Inc., which included installing cameras at Universal Studios several years ago that greatly reduced the incidence of pickpockets. "We just helped solve a murder in the East Bay using surveillance cameras at a gas station," Spearman said. "People say it's an invasion of privacy, but if you're not doing anything wrong, what's the problem? "When you're walking down the street, the average citizen can see you," Spearman said. "BART trains have (cameras). Red lights have them for traffic. These things are not X-rays, they are just electronic eyes. They are for the greater good."

The San Francisco Housing Authority has overseen the program to erect cameras in some of its developments; cameras on city property are overseen by the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice.

VERTICAL FARMING IN THE BIG APPLE

From an article by Jeremy Cooke on www.bbc.co.uk

Downtown Manhattan is hardly a place you would associate with agriculture. Rather, with its countless restaurants, cafes, shops and supermarkets this is a place of consumption. And so every morsel, every bite of food New Yorkers munch through every day must be trucked, shipped or flown in, from across the country, and across the world. Now though, scientists at Columbia University are proposing an alternative. Their vision of the future is one in which the skyline of New York and other cities include a new kind of skyscaper: the "vertical farm".

The idea is simple enough. Imagine a 30-storey building with glass walls, topped off with a huge solar panel. On each floor there would be giant planting beds, indoor fields in effect. There would be a sophisticated irrigation system. And so crops of all kinds and small livestock could all be grown in a controlled environment in the most urban of settings. That means there would be no shipping costs, and no pollution caused by moving produce around the country.

It's all the brainchild of Columbia University Professor Dickson Despommier. He and his students took existing greenhouse technology as a starting point and are now convinced that vertical farms are a practical suggestion. Professor Despommier lists many advantages of this revolutionary kind of agriculture. They include:

* Year round crop production in a controlled environment

* All produce would be organic as there would be no exposure to wild parasites and bugs

* Elimination of environmentally damaging agricultural runoff

* Food being produced locally to where it is consumed

And, says the professor, vertical farming would allow some existing traditional farms to be returned to natural forests. Good news in a time of global warming. "Even if it's not quite natural.... a little bit factory-like in terms of its production, here's what you're going to get back: you're going to get back the rest of the earth. And I'll take that any time."

The plan is to make the whole complex sustainable. Energy would come from a giant solar panel but there would also be incinerators which use the farm's waste products for fuel. All of the water in the entire complex would be recycled.

Several hours drive north of the city in upstate New York, Ed Miller's 18,000 apple trees are in full bloom. Like farmers across the world he has lived through decades of constant change and innovation. But he remains, at heart, a man of the soil. So what does he think of the virtual farm concept? He is, perhaps, surprisingly positive: "It looks like a fancy greenhouse," he says. "It's fabulous, it will be very interesting. It will be phenomenal."

For now, vertical farms are a virtual concept. But the scientists insist that the theory is sound. All they need now, they say, is the money to make this a reality.

DUTCH MP CALLS FOR BAN ON QURAN

From an article on aljazeera.net

A Dutch member of parliament has called for the Quran to be banned in the Netherlands, describing it as a "fascist book" which calls on people to kill non-believers and rape women. Geert Wilders, leader of the far-right Freedom Party, called for the ban in a letter published in *De Volkskrant* newspaper. In his letter, Wilders compares the Muslim holy book to *Mein Kampf*, Adolf Hitler's autobiography, and said the Quran has "no place in our constitutional state."

"I have been saying this for years: there is no such thing as a moderate Islam," Wilders wrote. Wilders' Freedom Party holds nine seats in the Netherlands' 150-seat parliament.

Call for ban

Wilders also said several chapters in the Quran "call on Muslims to oppress, persecute or kill Christians, Jews, dissidents and non-believers, to beat and rape women and to establish an Islamic state by force".

The publication of the letter comes after a weekend attack on Eshan Jami, a young Dutch politician, who established a group to support people who have renounced Islam. Jami, who was not visibly injured in the attack, is now under police protection as is Wilders. "Ban this wretched book like Mein Kampf is banned! Send a signal to Jami's attackers and other Islamic radicals that the Quran cannot be used in the Netherlands as an inspiration or an excuse for violence," Wilders said.

Wilders acknowledged that his plan would not receive majority support in the Dutch parliament. "I am fed up with Islam in the Netherlands: no more Muslim immigrants allowed. I am fed up with the worship of Allah and Muhammad in the Netherlands: no more mosques," his letter concluded.

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WITH END OF TERM IN SIGHT, SOUTH AFRICA'S LEADER FACES CHALLENGES FROM ALLIES

From an article in The New York Times

JOHANNESBURG, South African democracy is so adolescent, barely 13 years old and still largely unformed, that almost every significant political development is a precedent. Now some wonder whether president Thabo Mbeki is about to create a new one: the lame duck. Mr. Mbeki, the nation's dominant political figure since the middle of Nelson Mandela's presidency in the late 1990s, has 20 months left before his second and final five-year presidential term ends in 2009. But suddenly, he is looking vulnerable.

The latest and most dramatic example surfaced recently, when he abruptly fired Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge, a deputy health minister who had earned international acclaim by turning around the government's hapless efforts to address South Africa's AIDS crisis. The deputy, Mr. Mbeki said, was not a team player. Criticism of that dismissal was surely expected. But not, perhaps, from such close quarters: The Congress of South African Trade Unions, a partner with Mr. Mbeki's African National Congress in the political alliance that rules the nation, accused the president of weeding his government of talented officials while leaving stacks of "deadwood" untouched. "Basically, if you're working hard and are an independent thinker, you will get the chop," the group's leader, Zwelinzima Vavi, said. The South African Communist Party, the other partner in the ruling alliance, was just as blunt. "We are of the view that this requires a fundamental review of the exercise of the presidential prerogative" in appointing and firing officials, the party said. Ms. Madlala-Routledge is one of the party's rising stars.

More is at stake here than one deputy's job. South Africa's ruling political party, the African National Congress, or ANC, will convene in December to choose its leader. Mr. Mbeki is an undeclared but ardent candidate for a third five-year term. If he wins, he will effectively be able to choose his successor as South Africa's president and, perhaps, continue controlling national politics from behind the throne. Now a phalanx of his opponents, led by Communists and trade unionists on the political left, are moving to derail his plans. A host of others, including rival parties like the rightist Democratic Alliance and ideological foes in left-leaning advocacy groups, are only too happy to help. And for the first time, Mr. Mbeki's plans seem in jeopardy.

At a party conference in June, the ANC's delegates gave Mr. Mbeki's hopes to succeed himself a tepid endorsement at best, ruling the idea neither in nor out. In July, the South African Communist Party, an influential ally of the ANC, purged its central committee of Mr. Mbeki's supporters, including three cabinet ministers. That same month, the Congress of South African Trade Unions—the other pillar of the party's three-legged political alliance—staged a bitter walkout of teachers and municipal workers. The walkout was incited by a wage dispute, but it was also an unmistakable rebuff to Mr. Mbeki's labor and economic policies.

Some political analysts say that Mr. Mbeki was effectively circling the wagons last week when he fired Ms. Madlala-Routledge, who has, as he complained, been a thorn in his side. The government insists—and analysts seem to agree—that its reinvigorated programs against AIDS will continue unchanged; Ms. Madlala-Routledge, after all, was only implementing orders from higher-ups, including the president. Still, the slights Mr. Mbeki is now enduring, those same analysts say, would have been unthinkable even 18 months ago. Then, the president was criticized as aloof, intolerant of criticism and dismissive of the political left—but also described as a powerful, savvy leader.

Today, "Mbeki's no longer the bullet-proof, all-powerful, imperial president he was perceived to be in the early 2000s," said Jonathan Faull, a political researcher at the Institute for Democracy in South Africa, or Idasa. "He's lost popularity within the ANC and the alliance generally."

While that may bode ill for Mr. Mbeki, it may not be so bad for Africa's star democracy. In the 13 years since South Africa's liberation from apartheid, the African National Congress has wielded such dominance, capturing two-thirds of the electorate in the last election, that many have called the nation a one-party state. As the party's choice of a new leader draws closer, complaints about Mr. Mbeki have only grown louder. The considerable left argues that the government's Western-style policies, including privatizing state industries and luring foreign investors, have hardly lessened the nation's vast poverty, which seems immune to conventional economic remedies. Political moderates, meanwhile, question his gentle treatment of authoritarian states like China, Zimbabwe and Myanmar, and his refusal, until this year, to mount an assault on AIDS.

Mr. Mbeki's loss is usually cast as a gain for his chief rival Jacob Zuma, a populist who has become a favorite of South Africa's left, despite trailing a string of corruption and sexual scandals. Mr. Zuma is gunning to succeed Mr. Mbeki both as ANC president and president of South Africa. "It's not that we're 100 percent for Zuma," said one senior figure in the Communist Party, who refused to be named. "It's that we're 100 percent anti-Mbeki."

But the rivalry between the men's camps has become so poisonous that some party leaders are now said to be looking for alternatives to lead the party. Two of the most-mentioned ones are veterans of South Africa's liberation struggle who have since become business tycoons, Tokyo Sexwale and Cyril Ramaphosa. Neither has declared his candidacy for the party's leadership, much less South Africa's presidency, which is determined by a vote of Parliament. But each has made it clear that he would not refuse a call to service.

Still, any number of political experts here say that it would be a mistake to write off Mr. Mbeki before party delegates select their leader at the December conference. "Mbeki is a president who can fight back," said Dirk Kotze, a political scientist at Unisa, South Africa's major public university, in Pretoria. "He has the reputation of a very shrewd strategic planner. And he's not going to roll over and die."

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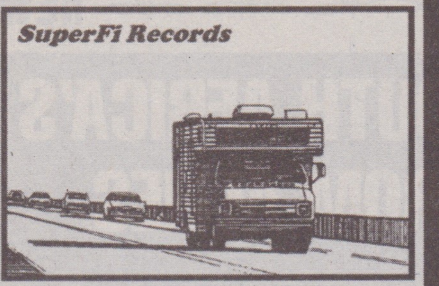

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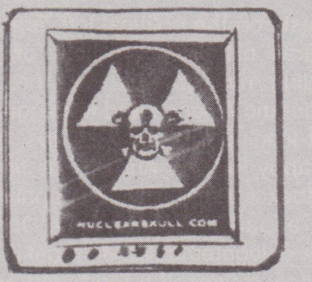

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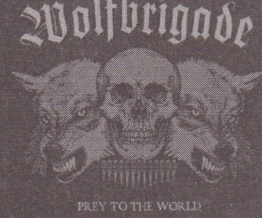

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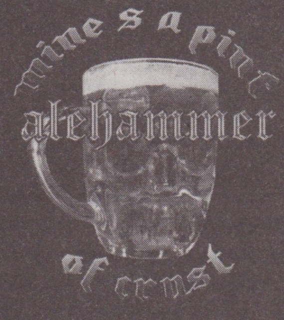

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OLYMPIA, WASHINGTON
scene report

by miss radar

A long time has passed since the halcyon days of the Olympia music scene. The ability to see the town's top bands in Olympia's 1000-seat theater one day, and in a 20-person basement show the next seems to be lost in our salad days. There is speculation by some that the era of Olympia's reign as one of the best all-ages music scenes in the country may be over; K Records has a release schedule around two a year these days…and Kill Rock Stars head-honcho Slim Moon has jumped ship to New York to work for the major label Nonesuch.

This isn't to say that the scene in the rainy-state-capital is not as vital to its inhabitants as it once was. What may be lost in size and attention may be found in intimacy and die-hard vitality. With the larger, mostly-famous record labels from Olympia shifting units out of town, or focusing on their back catalog, new labels have began to come out of the woodwork. Olympia's folk-punk group The Pasties (who recently were arrested by the Olympia Police Department for giving a free concert during the annual Lakefair) are just one of a half dozen bands on the collectively ran Na Na Na Na Boo Boo Records; and Dead End Social Club Records (started by the anti-racist skinhead crew of the same name) has just released its third single in a year by British soul group Lucky Soul, adding diversity to its catalog of ska and Oi singles.

ROCKET ATTACK

Ten years ago Olympia venues were packed to the gills with touring bands and there were no shortages of places to play. In the decade since the Capital Theater Backstage barley eeks out a show a quarter, the Arrowspace is now closed, the Yes Yes has become no no-longer, and the Midnight Sun's constant shifts in management and focus on theater has rendered the venue useless for the most part.

Thank god for Manium, now remodeled and able to accommodate more individuals and sell liquor to the over-21 crowd. The venue, operated by Wolves In The Throne Room (Southern Lord records signees!) guitar player and former Lords of Lightspeed guru Nathan Weaver has been the go-to place for all-ages punk action for both local and national talent. At any given time you can see punk legends such as MDC play with young-eager local groups such as the Slashers.

Rather surprisingly, for the town that created Riot Grrl and Love Rock… Perhaps spurred on by the emo-epidemic, today's under-21 scene is spin-kicking and karate dancing its way across the dance floor, paying more attention to the new national en vogue hardcore exuding their faux-toughness. Bands like Vindication, Triumph and Tragedy, and Lost Cause have already come, drew brief attention, and disbanded. Of course the hardcore band drawing the most national attention out of Oly is Sex/Vid (although the members are in their mid-to-late-20s) with their nod to '80s hardcore as well as mid-'90s groups. Another notable band—only because rather than ripping off Madball and AF, they chose Charles Bronson—is Olympia power-violence group Rocket Attack! who will be releasing a debut 7" on One Six Oh Records in the near future. (By then I hope they loose the Youth Attack Records rip-off logo they have been known to use!) Olympia has always been a scene devoted to bands that don't seem to last long, so it's surprising that bands like Fitz of Depression are still holding on. Still others

SEX VID

THE PASTIES

who have met their sad end and have spawned new bands.

Rising out of the ashes of the Olympia mod/punk/skinhead group The Revlons (who *MRR* once called the best thing out of Olympia in a while…and remarkably original hardcore punk…) is Secret Chiefs featuring members of The Revlons and North Carolina ska band Faction 7. It is not known how long they may stay around, but from the looks of things they are picking up steam and beginning to solidify as a band.

There are rumors a-foot that some folks in the area, sick of people who drove them to punk becoming punks themselves, are planning a medium-sized festival to take place in Olympia and Seattle, featuring a pretty amazing mix of well-known Oi and hardcore bands. Hoping to "take it back," "'cause it was ours first," a reinvigorated community of individuals in their late-20s/early-30s are hoping to show the all-ages crowd what was so vital to the hardcore/punk community to begin with.

In a town with little to do other than play music, make art, or begin an early life of alcoholism and get your 18-year-old girlfriend pregnant, Olympia offers enough cultural events and amenities to keep one somewhat sane. Phantom City , Rec the Place, and Rainy Day are decent, small record stores that each have their own charm. There is a decent film society (although most of the films they show are on DVD…and it is the Netflix generation), and there is ample cheap housing to fill anybody's dirtbag lifestyle.

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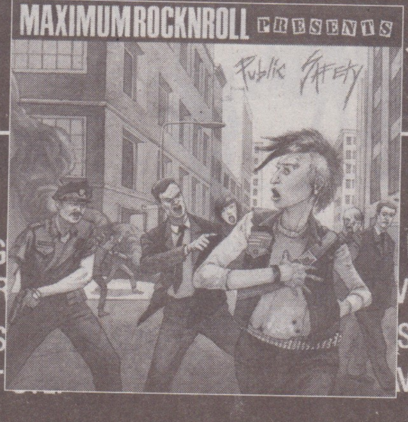

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INTERVIEW BY RYAN PUNX.

PIG CITY LIFE

MRR: Give us some info on Anti-You—when it started, why it started, whatever we need to know to understand the band better.

PG: Anti-You was started couple of years ago, by Paolo (the drummer) and me. We used to meet sometimes in the rehearsal room to play some cover songs, just for fun, you know, with guitar and drums.

Paolo: We started playing Minor Threat covers, and then Marco from Palermo finally moved to Roma. Marco is the bass player for the awesome Semprefreski, and we didn't lose any time. We literally caught him as he first set foot in Roma.

PG: The last step was natural: finding someone to scream, and starting to write our own songs. So we called Andrea, who had been playing in bands for years but never sang, and that was it.

Paolo: Andrea is the third MacKaye brother. He has the MacKaye face, the MacKaye appeal, you know... It's like playing with fucking Minor Threat. I thank any possible god when I play with this MacKaye-blessed guy. We had to get him to conquer the universe.

MRR: Everybody in Anti-You is older, correct? What gets you guys to keep playing fast, pissed-off music at this age?

Paolo: No, actually everybody in the band is old. I am older. We play fast pissed music because we're nice people loving each other and everybody in the whole world, and, you know, you gotta blow off the steam that accumulates inside while you generally act like a nice guy.

Andrea: Hey, we're not really that old! We're all in our early to mid-thirties, which isn't really that uncommon in hardcore punk nowadays, at least here in Europe. I don't know what it's like in the States, since I've never been there. But over here, I know quite a few people in our age group who are still more or less involved in it. Whether or not that's a good thing is a different story. And I'm still playing this stuff because it's fun and it's exciting, most of the time. Once I stop enjoying it, I'll quit, with no regrets whatsoever. I'm pretty comfortable with the notion that most things have to end, sooner or later.

PG: I'm 30 and I'm the youngest guy. I've been playing in bands since I was seventeen, and I guess the reason I'm still doing the same old hardcore shit is because in these thirteen years I haven't changed that much. I mean, back then I was pissed and depressed and I loved this fast and angry and simple music that really fuelled me, and I loved everything that surrounded it: the people, the political aspects, the DIY idea, the shitty dirty places where shows were set up, being different from the average Italian guy, etc. So basically I still play it because I still love all those things. Maybe one day I'll start hating them, but so far so good

MRR: What I like about Anti-You is that the lyrics are not political as far as talking about certain topics but are very political when it comes to the everyday struggle. What do you guys think about the words behind the music in hardcore? What your reason for the anger?

Andrea: It's funny, because except for a couple of songs on our first record I've never seen my lyrics as the political or personal/political type. They're just my thoughts, mostly bursts of frustration, or contempt, or anger, as you put it, made to fit our 30-second songs. I'm not sure how anyone else could relate to them (except for "Pig City," but we'll get to that later) but maybe that's only because writing is something I'm pretty new at and I'm still not sure if I'm doing it right. The words behind the music are important, and sometimes the balance between the two is just right, like Negative Approach or Discharge or Rites of Spring or Hüsker Dü, and that's what makes a punk band truly memorable. But then again, I admit that these days I'll take a great-sounding song with silly lyrics over any Crass record.

PG: Still, everyday life is political in one way or the other, and I guess our lyrics reflect our attitude towards many aspects of everyday life, be they relationships or the places we live or the "scene" we're in, and how pissed we are about lots of stuff that surrounds us. As for the words behind the music, I guess that in hardcore, the words should come before the music, which is not happening that much anymore. Actually, at this point, now that I've read thousands of hardcore lyrics, hardly any of them are gonna change my life or even inspire me that much, as happened sometimes many years ago. But I guess good lyrics, especially when they're really heartfelt and sincere, can still be inspiring to younger kids, as they were for me.

MRR: I have seen a lot of retro stuff happening in hardcore these days. What do you think about hardcore today compared to when you first got into it?

PG: Hell yeah, lots of retro stuff in hardcore these days! And I'm happy about it. And I think there is a reason behind it, and it's because basically what is called hardcore today (which in most cases is not really hardcore, in my opinion), sucks badly! In the last decade or so, punk has become really popular, and it transformed itself, so now you have metal in it, you have this thing called emo in it, you have I don't know what other kind of bullshit in it, but it's all classified under the main "hardcore" genre. Everything is ____core. Fuck that. It has nothing to do with hardcore punk, either musically or ethically. It also all became more professional. The shittiest band now is technically ten thousand times better than the average band that was around ten or fifteen years ago. Bands have all their expensive equipment (it wasn't like that before!); they make shirts and merchandise and websites before even playing their first show and after a month it's video time. Of course, there are still good bands who play hardcore and are hardcore, but the scene is so large now that it all becomes mixed up, and most of the stuff that is coming out is really crap, and, as I said, has nothing to do with the -core. Drop the -core when defining your band, please! Example: metal-core? No, metal! Go shoot your video for MTV! Going back to the retro thing, maybe people are getting tired of all these fake punk hardcore bands, and prefer to go back to the real good old bands and good old sound. Also, maybe now the real good old bands want their piece of cake since the cake is much bigger than it was twenty years ago? I think they would deserve it, anyway.

Paolo: The internet changed the whole thing. Back in the days you had to be curious and hungry; you had to move, meet people, do things. A lot of friends of mine became small record distributors just to put their hands on records they couldn't find in shops. Now it's more like a big library. You have access to many things—maybe too many, so you can easily lose focus and give just a little amount of time and attention to every experience. When I got my copy of Millions of Dead Cops or Bedtime For Democracy, I spent months translating all the lyrics, dissecting the cover art, and losing myself in any possible detail, in part because getting one of those records wasn't always easy. And yes,

there's retro stuff happening, but I guess this is happening in every aspect of "pop culture," since we've seen it all, and when it looks like there's nothing new, people try to recreate the past. Sometimes it's an honest effort, but sometimes it's just corny.

Marco: I won't use the word "retro." It just makes no sense for a lot of reasons: if you're doin' something today, it will most likely have nothing in common with something else that happened 25 years ago under totally different conditions and circumstances. Music-wise, what's happening in hardcore nowadays probably happened in most music genres before: after years of evolving, it got so far from the original pattern that it naturally turned back to its roots. What I personally feel about the whole issue is that today's hardcore and punk is easy and safe. And that makes it totally different from what I grew up with.

MRR: What's the song "Pig City" all about? What does "pig city" mean?

Paolo: I guess it means a place full of buildings where animals that grunt and roll in their own shit live. I might be wrong, though.

Andrea: Pig City is Rome, where we live, but it could be any other large city anywhere else. I have one of those typical love/hate attitudes towards the place. I don't think I'd ever move away, because it's beautiful, the weather's great, it's home, my family and most of my friends are here, and all that, but at the same time, I sometimes wonder why I don't get the hell out, since there's so much about it that I consider insane. To me, Rome seems like an overgrown village sometimes, almost as if it grew way too fast for its own good and has all the fucked up things you usually find in big cities and none of the practical, commonsense things you need to get by. When I wrote those lyrics, I didn't have the usual punk rock stuff like the Vatican and the government in mind, even though it's hard not to feel their presence here. I was thinking about what I mentioned above, which includes ordinary, everyday shit, like random assholes, aggro, alienation, the hours stuck in traffic.

MRR: What's your favorite song to play, and which song means the most?

Andrea: "OPND," from our first record. It's a song about hope. We'll see how long it lasts.

Paolo: I love to play "Clue," from the first CD, but we usually don't play it live; I'm not sure why not. And "Ask Me" was the first song we completed, so I feel a parental love for that one.

PG: My favorites are "Ask Me If I Give A Fuck" (it's the first song we wrote, and it's maybe our most known song), "No Questions And No Answers," and "Pig City." I usually like to play the shortest and fastest songs. Well, actually, almost all our songs are short and fast!

Marco: I guess mine are "No Questions" and "Ask Me If I Give A Fuck." We have a bunch of cover versions that I love to play too, but never end up doing those. We don't play "Clue" because everyone hates it except you, Paolo.

MRR: Tell us about the scene in Italy: bands, venues, whatever else.

PG: What I said about the hardcore not being hardcore anymore totally applies to Italy, too. Still, there are some really good active bands worth checking out, like Die!, F.U.G., The Fourth Sin, Comrades, The Difference, Tear Me Down, L.E.A.R.N., Ingegno, La Crisi, Watch Your Step, La Piovra, Coke Rocket, Death Before Work, and Headed Nowhere. As for venues, hardcore shows usually used to take place in squats and were tied to a certain kind of politically active network of people and places, but lately, things changed a lot, and now most shows take place in clubs where every kind of band plays. It's as if hardcore has become just a kind of music, which it was not supposed to be. Luckily, there are still squat shows, but they don't happen that often.

Paolo: In Rome, we have quite a big scene. This month, an antifascist compilation of punk/hardcore bands came out with 24 bands on it, and there are many more. The musical level ain't bad; there was a little Oi! revival a couple of years ago, but I think it's fading out (thank god), and also the metal contingent is kinda gone. Now it seems the main interest is playing fast, and we feel at home with that. The venues in Italy are usually squats, some good and some bad. There are some clubs, but I definitely prefer to play in squats. I'm old and old fashioned.

Marco: I personally like the Rome scene a lot. It's one of the most active in Italy. There's a bunch of extremely good record stores and labels focusing on the music we like. From a wider point of view, Intellectuals and Taxi are the best acts in Rome in my opinion. Die! is the best thing that happened to Italian hardcore in quite some time. But I could really go name droppin' for two pages, so I better stop here.

MRR: I am sure a lot of touring bands want know why the hell shows start so late in Rome at that squat. When I Object! played that place, the show started at 1:00 a.m. and we didn't play until 4:00 a.m. I heard that when What Happens Next? played, they went on at like 5 in the morning. What's the deal?

Paolo: I was in that same place yesterday to see Vitamin X and MDC. When I got out, it was 3:30 and MDC were halfway through their set. What can I say? Fuck knows!

Andrea: It's gotta be a mix of Mediterranean culture, laziness, unemployment, alcohol, hash and, uh, "anarchism." That's just how it is sometimes, folks, especially on weekends and in the summer. It's ridiculous. So keep that in mind next time you want to book a squat show over here. When you guys played

here you probably had all that, plus the Italy vs. USA World Cup game. This country stops for soccer and so do we, because we know that soccer kicks hardcore's ass. Really.

MRR: Can you give us some rad bands to check out and that keep you guys going?

Andrea: I like most of the classic American hardcore punk bands you can think of and most of the classic Italian hardcore punk bands you can think of, most of the Revolution Summer DC stuff, as well as Born Against, H100's, La Crisi, and Smalltown.

Paolo: Among Roman bands, we're more than brothers with Die! (Andrea plays bass with them) and have a strong friendship with Payback and The Fourth Sin. Nowadays, there are three bands in Italy I think you should check out: Ingegno from Perugia (metallic frantic drama-core), La Crisi from Milano (fast Indigesti-like hardcore with a crazy singer) and F.U.G. from Palermo (old-style HC, just like us).

Marco: Murder by Guitar and Vicious are two recent bands that really made my heart beat. Dean Dirg from Germany rocks, too. As for the past: Ramones, Avengers, Descendents, Circle Jerks, and Bad Religion could be a rough top five. But I actually love everything from Eddie Cochran to Run-DMC.

MRR: Any plans to come to the US for a tour? We need more good hardcore from your way coming our way.

PG: No, we have no plans, but we'd love to come over. I was already on tour in the States in the summer of '99 with my first band that was called This Side Up. We did about forty shows all over the States and it was a great experience, even if things work quite different compared to Europe!

Paolo: I can't even plan what I'll eat for breakfast tomorrow. The other guys in the band make plans and organize. I'm the one who hopes and prays and sometimes mourns.

Marco: Our friend Nat from Puke 'n' Vomit always asks us to come over and tour California, but we've never gone. This next year, we gotta make it.

MRR: Thanks for the time, guys, and please end with anything you would like to say.

Paolo: If you ever come to Rome, go to eat gnocchi at Agustarello, Via Branca, Testaccio. Brilliant chef, cheap restaurant. Or you can eat at my house. I'm quite a good chef, too.

Marco: Look mom! I'm in Maximum Rocknroll!

ANTI YOU

LOSER LIFE

I spent a year in Bakersfield, California—a very long year I might add. What at first glace was a tired and worn out city devoid of any true punk scene turned out to be the breeding ground for a new crop of true DIY bands. I met Steven of Loser Life at Going Underground, Bakersfield's only predominately punk record store. What began as a simple offer to go see some shows together wound up as a cassette label, a ten-day west-coast tour and a failed attempt at releasing the I Have Ghosts And I Have Ghosts LP. What follows is an interview I conducted with the members of Loser Life right after they played San Francisco at the start of a 60-day US tour. Interview and introduction by Scott Miller.

Pictures by Nick Goode, Scott Miller and Martin Sorrondegui.

MRR: It was good to see you guys today; it's been a while. It was cool to see people getting into it. It seems to be a demographic thing, don't you think? I mean, people in Bakersfield don't understand you guys at all, but then again when you look at what the scene is into out there, it seems to have no real substance to begin with...

Steven: Bakersfield is a weird place. I can't really explain it but there isn't really a *bro-bands* connection there. It seems like everyone is just in competition with each other. I mean, there is a tight connection with us and Contaminators, but that's because Ronald is one of my best friends. Other than that, we don't really have band chums or really get excited about other bands doing anything productive. It's sorta weird. It's like a domino effect. They don't support, so it's hard for us to support. Both parties are at fault. We just tend to isolate ourselves.

Bobby: I agree. Just trashy people.

Reuben: The only shows that we have in Bakersfield are with out of town bands. The scene here is so clique-y that we don't have all-local shows. And when we do, nobody shows up because people are too into their own thing.

MRR: You have released a good amount of material in the last year: *Things Will Never Change* 7" on Going Underground, *Bad Teeth And Cancer* tape on Bakersfield, *I Want The World* 7" on Life's A Rape and now the *I Have Ghosts And I Have Ghosts* CD/LP on Magic Bullet. Do you feel that with this most recent release on a bigger label that you are reaching the people that you want to be hearing Loser Life?

Steven: Honestly, I don't even care about that. I mean, I don't think about who listens to us or not. I like to play shows and to record and to do all the band business stuff. It's a lot of fun for me. The whole process of setting up a tour, records, recording, or different shows; it's something I really enjoy. So the whole: "I want these people to listen to Loser Life" is sort of irrelevant in my life.

Bobby: We just wanted to have an album out. Nothing to do with trying to become popular, we just wanted it out there.

Reuben: I don't care about the politics of labels or "who's on what" cliché, we just want a label to get it done, and get it done right.

Bill: We're not here for a popularity contest... We're not even popular as people.

MRR: I heard someone mention that there is already another 12" in the works, *My Hell*—who's putting that out?

Steven: Life's A Rape is putting the 12" out. Colin (Life's A Rape head honcho) is also putting out a compilation that will have another song on the 7". We also have two other songs we're going to have recorded that we will probably do nothing with.

MRR: Are there plans to do another release with Brent (Magic Bullet)? Was there a contract or anything given to you?

Steven: No contract. Just a friend wanting to put out something of ours. I've known Brent for a few years and this was the first time he had an opportunity to work with me. And I am happy we got to. Brent is great and I really can't wait to work with him in the future. No plans as of yet when it comes to future releases, but it's not a big deal. It's all on the whim of things.

MRR: There were a couple of things that stood out on the CD and LP layout that I wanted to talk to you about. First of all, what are your feelings about having a barcode printed on the actual back cover? I know it is the nature of the business nowadays, but why not a top spine sticker like other labels?

Steven: I didn't know a bar code was going to be put on the CD like that. I didn't even ask because I just didn't think about it. And so it's nobody's fault but ours. We are all anarchists in the band, so our feelings are pretty obvious on how we feel about something like a barcode on our CD. We're not going to lose sleep over it though and we know next time to really avoid anything that deals with that kind of stuff.

Bobby: I am really bummed on it. It's just a symbol of capitalism that I really hate to associate with. But we know for next time.

Reuben: The likelihood of it being scanned is very little. And hopefully the people that buy the CD will go to places that don't use barcode scans. And support independent shops, labels, and distros.

Bill: Brent putting the bar code on the album means he has way too high an expectation of how it's going to sell. *(laughter)*

MRR: The other thing is, 16OH and MISM helped with the LP getting released and I noticed that the 16OH logo has a silhouette of Jesus in a crosshairs. It almost seems like a gimmick to get people that are "anti-religion" to approve of it. Is Loser Life going for that anti-Christianity image?

Steven: I really hate that logo. I don't want to associate the band with any type of religion or anti-religion. All of it is bullshit to me and I want Loser Life to have nothing to do with anything that deals with that. Religion is bullshit, we all should know that. Why do we have to keep reminding ourselves that it is?

Reuben: None of our lyrics deal with religion. It's a subject we don't preach to the choir about. And bands that are always using anti-religious symbols tend to be generic and uninteresting. I have more important things to worry about.

Bill: It's overplayed. I don't want to associate myself with any anti or pro.

MRR: I saw a band play the other night that was selling their LP for $20, claiming it to be almost out of print. Do you feel that the demand for a product deems its potential worth?

Steven: No. That is so stupid to me. I would have spit in the band's faces. I am a record collector and I know what it is like to pay top dollar and to have good finds. But coming across a touring band that is selling their own band's record for a higher price because they say it's out of print is baffling to me. I guess they are able to flatter themselves to the point where they think people actually care. I am not talking about tour packages either. I saw Imperial Leather and they had that pleather LP cover on their US West Coast tour. That made sense because it cost them a lot to make and they had alternative LPs for someone to buy if they didn't want to pay the high price. But to have 50 records sitting in your merch box and wanting to sell them for eBay prices at a show because some dipshit paid too much for it in the first place, then I am upset more people aren't throwing it in their face.

Bill: I think that is bullshit; I don't know anyone that would buy something like that.

Reuben: Record shops do the same thing, but they only have a limited amount. The band is the main distributor. It's a sticky moral situation, but we would never overprice our own record. Fuck that.

Bobby: When those situations arise, I'd rather just download it.

MRR: Your songs have always been dark, but the LP is way more depressing than the other recordings—why?

Steven: I live in Bakersfield, California. If you have been there, I don't really need to explain. But if you haven't, it's a desolate place that for some weird reason has nothing but imbeciles. A shit-hole infested city that lacks any common sense, proper ethics, or even basic manners, Bakersfield is a fucked up place. You can ask any band that has played here or anyone that has driven through; there is something in the water that makes things just a little different. So as far as *feelings* go or whatever, being stuck in a boomerang town like Bakersfield, it kind of

makes a person go insane.

Reuben: To tell you the truth, the previous song lyrics on the 7"s were from things I had written before, while on the LP, it's all new feelings. Perhaps I am just getting more cynical and discontented as I go along.

MRR: I know from touring with you guys last summer that you all listen to very different styles of music. How do you all feel that your influences come into play in your sound?

Steven: I don't want to tell you my influences because then you will see the different bands we rip off.

Reuben: I don't really care for the Pixies as a band, but I draw a lot of my lyrical and vocal style from Frank Black. I am also a very sloppy guitar player and I don't care to perfect it. But I feel my strumming patterns sound like washed over country bullshit. Also which I cannot correct because I listen to way too much Bob Dylan. [Reuben is chewing tobacco and spitting into a bottle while saying this]

Bobby: I am primarily influenced by Rikk Agnew because I am octave and harmonic heavy. I really love Dag Nasty with their melodic sound and octave usage. I try to get the darker or sadder sounds of death rock to give our sound a little more melancholic feeling.

Bill: My influences have always been the bass players that just dropped my jaw when I would hear their records. Not necessary their bands so much but just them as a bass player. Bass players like Jaco Pastorius and Victor Wooten; they have just made bass playing more than most people conceive it to be such as playing strictly along with the guitars.

MRR: Have any good tour stories or any embarrassing shit that has happened at your shows?

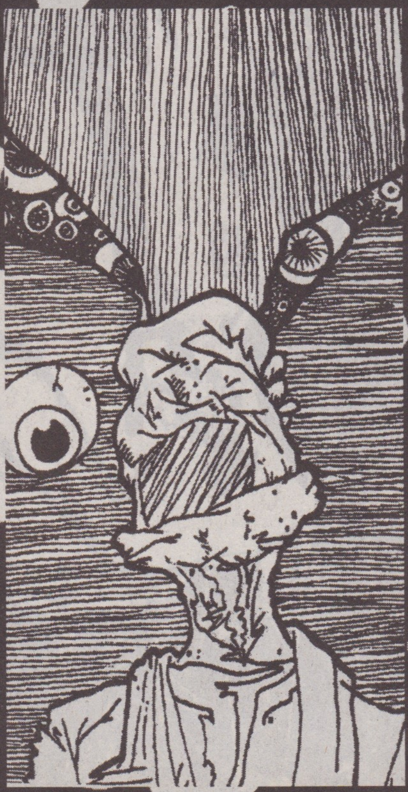
Steven: Reuben is a magnet for controversy. Wherever he goes, something always seems to happen. I am not going to pry, but just understand that you cannot fight Wild Turkey and win. He's lucky I am straight edge and always have his back. Especially when he gets taken into dark alleys with transvestites, drug addicts, and people "just looking for a good time."

Reuben: I fell with my cabinet in Portland in front of a lot of people. Not just tripped and fell, but slammed my face onto the ground where my hat and glasses went flying. Then everybody started to laugh. The other times I can't remember because that wasn't me, that was the Turkey talking.

Bill: In Denver, Reuben's female doppelganger started to follow us around. And she kept trying to party with Reuben, while asking him if he liked Linkin Park, Marilyn Manson, and Nine Inch Nails. She kept asking him crude questions about sex and fornicating. He of course shies up and hides in his corner but continues to play along in her games. By this time, the Turkey has taken over and she is obviously exploiting this. Trying to ditch her and go back to our van, she keeps running full throttle trying to keep up from behind. At this time she is spitting and cursing at Steven calling him an "asshole" and a "cunt." Reuben then takes a stand and in a firm drunken voice says "Look, we're going to cut the shit," spits his chewing tobacco, "we're all a little sketched out by you and we do not want to 'thrash it up' with you nor do we want to continue to hang out with you. So you need to leave". It may look dull on paper, but it was a huge highlight.

MRR: How did you guys hook up with Matt from the Salvation to do the art for the tour posters?

Steven: Matt hit me up one day about a year ago. He wanted to put out a Loser Life 7" or use one of our songs on a comp. I was obviously skeptical because everyone nowadays has a new label or comp they want to put out. So I gave him the dickhead, run-around answers. He just kept talking to us and I kept relating more and more. Long story short, he started to show me some of his artwork and I thought it was excellent. We needed an



idea for a tour poster and then he offered to draw something for it. His artwork fit the style perfectly so we totally ran with it.

MRR: I noticed an Edward Abbey book in your van and I have heard you guys refer to politically outspoken authors in conversations before. How does this play a part in your social or political views? Is it entertainment or education that you are after?

Steven: I was introduced to Edward Abbey a few years ago. His thoughts on anarchy, social structures, and the destruction of tools that destroy the beautiful deserts and forests have inspired me. I am not going to name-drop a bunch of radical political philosophers and authors, but I am an anarchist and I don't believe in government control. People were free before freedom was a word. I am not going to sit and preach to the choir, but I get excited just to think of the change that could happen in the next hundred years.

Reuben: I have read enough anarchist literature to know that anarchy is inevitable to an enlightened society. But that doesn't make me an optimist either. I am not actively trying to bring down the state, but I welcome its downfall. I have to admit, I get a sick sense of pleasure when I hear about revolutions and people battling governments. I am addicted to the news and I know that more and more people are falling through the fist. The tighter a government squeezes its hand into a ball, more and more people realize how unnecessary governments can become. I still vote, but I hand in an empty ballot. To me it's casting a vote for anarchy instead of settling for the lesser of two evils. I in no part with anything that has to do with getting them elected. Oh, and I hate the police.

MRR: What *is* your stance on voting? How do you feel about the possibility of the country being run by Barack Obama, do you feel he can make a difference?

Reuben: Every vote does count. But what doesn't matter is who you are voting for. It used to be that you could vote on someone's character but nowadays they don't even write their own speeches. Every night they go to bed with some kind of special interest in mind. It's gotten so expensive to run for office that they have to sell votes. I really wish that the whole election campaign process/business was standardized. And I wouldn't mind paying a tax so that all the people who want to run get a good amount of exposure. Basically spending $80 million on a campaign to get elected creates an aristocracy. If you have to be rich to run for office, then only rich people will be in office.

Steven: I totally agree with Reuben. Even though I don't totally agree with the taxing so that everyone gets a fair chance, money has obviously controlled the ballots. And of course at this point I just feel I am preaching to the choir, it doesn't matter what yuppie president comes into power. Especially with the damage Bush has done. I feel that it's pretty irreversible and I am just waiting for the water to fill the hole to drown all of us. And even falling victim to most conspiracies, there has to be a bigger picture that nobody really sees. So at this point, I don't know which puppet or tool they decide to put into the presidential spot, but I do know that regardless of what liberal or conservative comes in, it's all a sitcom to me.

MRR: How old are all of you?

Steven: 22

Reuben: 22, 23 this month!

Bobby: 24

Bill: 23

MRR: What would you do if they brought back the draft?

Steven: I don't know, hold my middle fingers into the air and would influence and encourage any of my friends or people I knew not to support it.

Reuben: I wouldn't go.

Bobby: I would buy a gun and then I would go into hiding. Then I would start draft riots. Fuck the police.

Bill: Change my name and run to Europe. *(laughs)*

MRR: Do you know anybody that has gone into the military?

Steven: My good friend Rudy is in the Navy right now. He's spent time in Iraq, Africa, and Japan. He has a wife and kids. Besides the obvious, the one thing that made me sick to my stomach is that he has to buy his own food over there. Not only does he have the worst living conditions, but the Navy is so cheap that they can't even supply him with food. You would think that since these peoples' lives are at stake that the government could at least supply something nutritious. But in the midst of combat they have to check and see if they have their $5 to purchase some shit food. Really sad.

Reuben: My brother is in the Air Force. He is in Germany and I really miss him.

MRR: How are you guys being affected by the current gas prices?

Steven: The DIY punk scene can be such a powerful thing if organized correctly. All someone has to do to keep it strong is to step up to the plate and do a good job when it's her/his turn to contribute. I don't understand why some people feel it is OK to have a free show for a band that is on tour for 50 days! I mean, it's noble I guess, but at $3.45 a gallon, free shows don't cut it. And we're not about making money, but we still definitely need enough dough to get to the next show. And with the rise of so many different touring bands, it's important to really help out bands that have put in their dues. I remember when I rarely got asked to put on a show, but now weekly I get at least seven different emails from different bands that all sound the same. It also irks me that most of these same bands tour off just a CD-R and expect a good turnout. And I am not on a high-horse looking down, I just don't think it's right when a band who is struggling and has a lot of material out is sharing the same bill as some other band that is jumping on their show and only have a CD-R, taking half of the door count's damage. It sounds elitist, but I am not rich and I know we can't afford gas being siphoned out of our gas tanks. I have no problem helping out bands, because we need help too. But time and time again has it been the case that I book a band that will bring people, and then another band wants to jump on the show, I let them, and they get pissed when I give most of the money to the main touring band. I understand that it's hard to get from city to city, but you can't ride on another band's tail when it comes to door money. I don't want to sound like a dickhead, because we have taken our cuts, but I feel like it's a serious thing.

Reuben: We have already burnt enough gas to buy that second plasma screen TV for the oil executives' bathroom. But that doesn't mean we will skim over all the middle-of-nowhere cities that seem to lack a lot of punk culture. It's important to play places like Utah, Kansas, etc. If all else fails, we have a gas siphon. And SUVs are the primary target. Just remember that you cannot count on door money to get from one place or another. Buy merch and support the touring bands. When you buy merch, it's a win/win situation.

Bobby: It costs us $90 to fill up. We make on average $70-$80, which is amazingly good. But as you can see, it's not enough all the time. House shows are more important than club shows nowadays. The fact that most clubs take a percentage or cut of the money, I prefer house/basement shows than playing in some bar or club. And even though they need money for their business, I would rather play a house.

Bill: Well it's been tough touring with the gas prices nowadays. On past tours I have been on we really wouldn't have a problem getting from place to place with playing free shows here and there, but now it's hard. I just think the people who promote the show that don't charge or flyer shouldn't be booking shows at all.

MRR: Other than Loser Life, what do you all do?

Steven: I work and go to school. I skateboard a lot too. I live with my grandfather and don't really do much else.

Reuben: I have a cat named Lilly and a dog named Squirt. They like to watch foreign films and talk about how much better they are than American films. I go to work and I pretend to be enthusiastic. But I really hate everyone that surrounds me.

Bill: I work for an electrical wholesale company. Hang out with my girlfriend.

Bobby: I work and go to school.

Steven: We're not called Winner Life...we really are losers.

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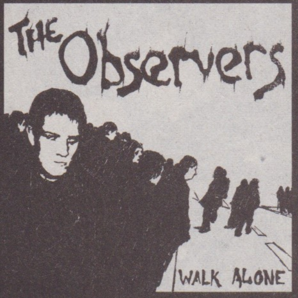

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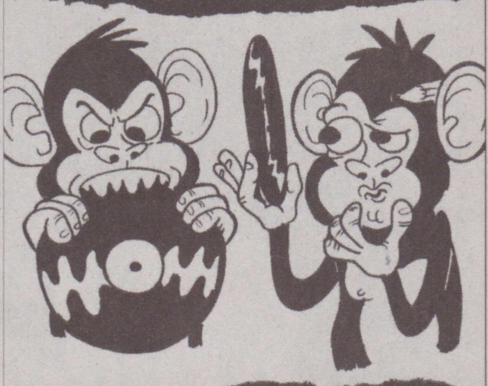

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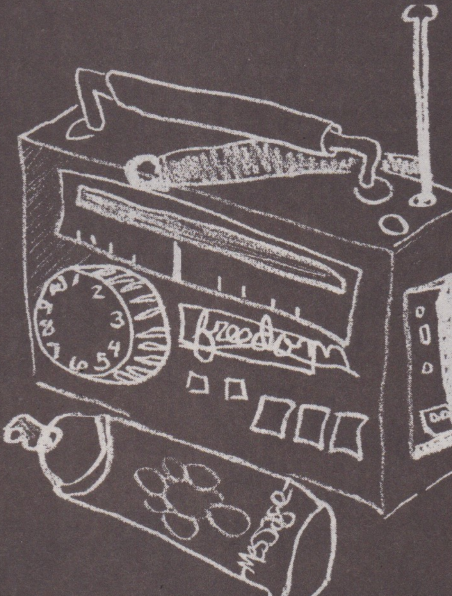

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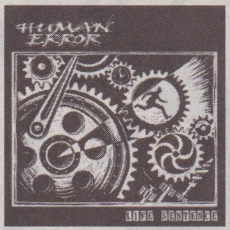

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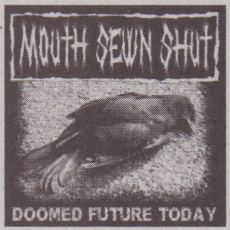

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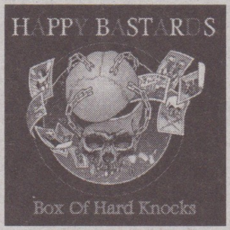

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MIGRAPUNX!

The idea for this issue of Maximum Rocknroll—the "migrapunk" issue, focusing on experiences of immigrant punks—was first discussed well over a year ago. The political mainstream in the United States was momentarily fixated on the "immigration issue"—as if immigration in this country could be collapsed into one issue—though very few realistic portrayals of what immigrant life in the US is like trickled to us through the lopsided media representations we received. Similarly, all of over Europe, hysterical portrayals of a criminal immigrant population saturated people's newspapers and television screens. All the while, the migra punks were screaming about it.

This is our first attempt at providing some punks' version of these stories—punk travel stories of a different sort than zine readers may be used to—littered with border police, inhospitable conditions, and treacherous border crossing instead of white-washed ideas of wide-open adventure.

Of course we have more to say on the topic of immigration, but frankly, we think these stories speak for themselves...

photo of sin orden
by david naylamp

ESNEIDER OF HUASIPUNGO

I came to the USA with a visa once. Fine country but not for me—never wanted to live here. I went back to Colombia and went on with my life. I went to shows. Mostly metal shows as there were no punk shows back them. There were very few punk bands. Metal ruled. I was finishing high school, I was part of the swimming team, went to shows, and helped organize a small student movement. Things it seemed, were good. Then, the political situation of the country started to go from bad to worse. A country with an open civil war (promoted and financed by the USA), an extensive drug trade (promoted and financed by the USA) and a "war on drugs" (promoted and financed by the USA). The so-called drug cartels started organizing their own private armies. The government and the army started increasing their dirty war now to include paramilitary forces.

Everyone around me started to get into one faction of the war or another. In the middle of all this I decided I needed to leave the country. That if I stayed I probably would not be alive for a long time. I did not want to be drafted into the army (it is compulsory) and because of political reasons I was at this point in serious danger. I got out. My visa to the USA had expired. So in a hurry I left Colombia for Mexico—a day after Mexico started demanding visas for anyone south of their border, so as to help the USA effectively make Mexico a buffer zone for the USA against the rest of Latin America and its people. This was in late 1985.

I entered Mexico because the immigration officer decided not to apply the new law to me. Pure luck. I did not have a plan or much money. I had a contact with a Colombian woman who arranged groups of Colombians to get a coyote and make the trip north. My time in Mexico City was pleasant, walking around, getting to know the city. But then I decided it was best I headed north to the USA to join my family who had migrated a year or so earlier also. My mother had been a lawyer, a judge, and mayor in Colombia and found herself having the need to leave.

I took a plane to Hermosillo, Sonora where I made contact with a coyote arranged by the Colombian woman. The coyote had no group of people so I had to wait at his place for a couple of days, hoping he would get a group of people to jump the border. As it was, a friend of his was heading up to the border so it was decided I would go with him, as it might be easier to hook up with someone that was crossing. We took a bus to Santa Ana, not far from the actual border. The bus was stopped by the army at a checkpoint. I acted like I was asleep and they never bothered me.

In Santa Ana we stayed for a couple of days but no one really came so we took a short trip to a ranch right at *la linea* (the border). The ranch was owned by a native American woman and her Mexican husband. For some reason I hit it off with them. I spent a few tedious days there. Waiting for the right conditions and some coyote to jump the border. The ironic thing is that the border was marked by a barbed wire fence that ran across the back of the farm. Inside the farm I could walk up to the border and see the Border Patrol trucks driving up and down the US side of the border.

One day three men came to the farm. They were Mexican federal agents looking for traffickers (drugs? humans? I don't know). What they found was a room full of bicycles that a smuggler was bringing to Mexico. I was interrogated for a little while and got a punched a couple of times—nothing dramatic but I was scared. Mexican police are notori-

ous for their brutality. Also I had no money to bribe them, which made them angrier. They left suddenly threatening to come back later. The ranch owners got scared for me: "You better go, they don't play."

At this point this particular crossing point was teeming with people waiting for the right moment to make a run for it. There were hundreds of people in different groups roaming the border area waiting. A coyote the ranch owners knew stopped by with a small group heading north. I was told to join them. We jumped the border that night and walked all night. The desert in the area gets cool at night. The hardest things I remember were the lack of food and the cactus needles that would prick you in the feet. They were about two inches long and sometimes strong enough to dig through the sole of the shoes to get to the base of your feet. You did not want to stop to pick them out as you would lose sight of the group and get lost in the desert.

Our group was made up of several Mexicans, three Colombian women, two Colombian men and me. During the day we walked under a searing heat. At some point we ran out of water and food. The coyote left us in a ditch and went to get food and water and to figure out what was next. He came back a little later. And we started walking again. Soon afterwards, a helicopter was right on top of us and there were several motorcycles around us. Everyone ran in a panic and I lost contact with the coyote. Facing the prospect of getting lost in the desert I turned back and the whole group minus the coyote got caught. We were put in a truck and driven to Tucson, Arizona. In a processing center we got fingerprinted, photographed, and interrogated. Then the men were put in small concrete room about 20 feet by 20 feet with a toilet on one side of the room. At some points there were up to 150 of us in the room. Mexicans would come and go fast. Buses would come and they would be loaded on and taken straight to the border. The only ones not going anywhere were me, a Cuban guy, and two Salvadorans. The other Colombian men disappeared and I never saw them again. The Cuban guy was a bit weird—he claimed to have come in the Mariel boatlift (in 1980) and that he was legal.

After about three days I was called outside the cell. The Colombian women were outside too—they were clean and told me they actually had beds to sleep in. We (men) slept right on the concrete floor with a thin blanket they gave us at night. They were also clean, they had showers! We did not. We got loaded into a van and taken to another immigration office where I was fingerprinted and processed again. I asked what was going on. I was told I had no right no know anything, as I was a minor. Afterwards we were loaded in a van again and driven to the airport. "I am getting deported," I thought. "I am dead." Once deported in Colombia you get processed by the DAS, Colombia's secret police. Who I was and what I did and most importantly what I thought and political ideas I had would come up. I would be dead...

We were chained with hands bound to a chain wrapped around our waist. Our feet were also chained together, which made us walk in a comical way—"the penguin walk." Fun. We were to be loaded on some small carrier. The way it works is that the agents that brought us to the airport have a huge manila envelope that has our paperwork. It is handed to the pilot who is supposed to hand it to whatever agents wait for us at the other side. First the crew refused to allow us on the plane is chains. So they were taken off (thanks for the small signs of humanity some people can show sometimes). Once on the plane I must have looked in some sorry state. At this point I had been walking in the dessert, detained in a concrete cell for a few days without as much as washing my hands or eating anything of substance. The steward allowed me to go to the bathroom where I washed my hands. I was given a meal even before the plane departed. I must have looked really bad as passengers gave me some of their food and someone gave me a T-shirt.

Much to my surprise, the plane landed in Las Vegas, Nevada. Why Las Vegas? To this day I cannot say what the hell happened. I expected this national flight to be going to Miami from where we presumably would be put on a plane to Colombia. Weird. We were taken to another processing center where I was fingerprinted and photographed again. From there we were put back in a van and driven to a jail that immigration subcontracted to "house" detainees. I was a little more freaked out, as this place looked more like a regular jail. We were again processed but this time it included a complete body search. As I was entering the search area there was a kid inside the bars looking out. I don't know why but I thought he was Colombian. I made eye contact with him. He asked me if I was Colombian...yeah, I said. "It's cool," he told me, "as soon as you come out to the yard I will be to the left, that is where we (Colombians) are."

I was still a minor so I got a yellow wristband with my name, date of birth, A-number, etc. An A-number is an alien registration number.

"We are punks, we are every day more and more. The world is not a homogenous place. We are all different, speak many languages, sing about different issues that affect us. We just happen to have had to move around."

This is who you are to the immigration system. Once they assign an A# to you it follows you through life. It will be on your green card if you get one. I was told I could not go into adult areas, cells, etc. I was assigned a cell. I walked out and turned left. Sure enough, there were about seven or eight kids there all from different cities in Colombia: Pereira, Medellin, Bogota, etc. I got assigned to a cell with four other kids—two from El Salvador and two from Guatemala. The Colombian kids helped me out by getting me some basic things (a piece of a bar of soap, a towel, etc.) and taught me the basics of the place. I made friends with a guard who gave us cigarettes. Since I don't smoke this became a bit of currency for me. I got a job in the kitchen cleaning, which allowed me to steal sugar, chiles, coffee, and other things I traded for whatever I needed.

A few weeks later when I turned eighteen I was called to the office. My bracelet was changed for a white one and I was reassigned to a different cell. I was now told not to enter the minors' areas, cells, etc. This sucked as I had made friends there and now I had to deal with the adult population. When I got to my new cell there was a huge Chicano guy there full of gang tattoos. He said something to me in English (I did not speak a word of English then) then he switched to a broken Spanish. I told him I was Colombian. He told me he had no beef with Colombians and to take the top bunk bed. So far so good, I thought. That night the Salvadoran and Guatemalan kids were taken out to be deported. Soon after that I got called to the office. I was told to grab my things. Once again I assumed I was getting deported. I got all my things and gave them away to the kids who were just coming in. I won't need that stuff, I thought. I was driven by van to the INS office where I got processed once again and was told to sit on a chair. After a few minutes I got called to a window, asked to sign a paper, then told to leave... Ah...what? Go, there is the door.

I did not know it but my family had posted bail for me. Once bail is posted and since I had become 18 they released me with the idea to send me a deportation letter later on. I went out the door. I did not know where I was, had no money, spoke no English, did not know how to make a collect call (didn't know it was even possible). I had no idea what to do. So I sat on the sidewalk and waited. A guy was walking down the street and asked me if I was Esneider. Umm, yeah. Oh OK, I am here to pick you up. The guy turned out to be a friend of a friend of the family. We got in his car and drove up the strip. Just like in some sort of surreal movie as the music reached a crescendo with casinos, pawnshops, streetwalkers, lights, glitter, drug addicts, tourists, stretch limousines, homeless people, and the smell of money and misery around he raised his arms and told me: "Welcome to America."

The next day I jumped bail by getting on a plane to New York. I arrived in New York in the middle of a snowstorm, to find one of my brothers in the hospital with a burst appendix.

For the next couple of years I did my best to adapt. Got really depressed, gained some 50 pounds and wanted to kill myself. Not a pretty picture. I attended language classes and learned as much English as I could. I made the decision not to become like some immigrant cases. The ones that worked sixteen hours a day, save all their money only to get robbed their first day back to their home country. Or the ones who do not learn English, "'cause I am leaving or getting kicked out any second," etc. So I started to get out a little more. Learned to navigate the limbo world of having no documents. Attended Queens College, got a job and eventually found the HC/punk scene. I lived in Queens but eventually found myself making my way to the Lower East Side for shows. CBGB's, squats, Tin Pan Alley, Lizard's Lounge, etc. I started writing to people, buying records, and trading via mail (there was no email then) but did not meet anyone really. I mostly stayed by myself. I talked to some people briefly but did not really make any friends.

One day someone sent me a letter asking me to meet some guy named Freddy Alva. His address was three or four blocks from mine. I was a little scared due to the realities of the NYHC scene back then. But I walked over anyway. He was of Peruvian origin and we soon became friends. Through him I started to meet people and eventually we all went down to ABC No Rio for its first set of punk matinees. I started to get involved. Around this time I also met Neil Robinson, an English punk who was an engine of Squat or Rot, setting up shows, doing a band, etc. I caught the DIY bug more and more. But this scene was not very aware of what was going on outside the USA, let alone in Latinoamerica. Most of the anarcho punk and/or hardcore punk scene was mostly white, while the violent, homophobic skin scene was actually anti-racist and very diverse. It was very confusing. One day at ABC someone came up to me and told me that there was some kid who was Latino and spoke no English. I went to meet him. He was Peruvian and his name was Ivan and with his brother Francisco we eventually started a band called Huasipungo. The idea was to sing in Spanish about the things that affected us—documents, violence, imperialism, and that we would do it in the language we would feel more comfortable with. We expected to receive at least the same amount of respect as any other band in our small scene.

Yet it became really hard to be taken seriously in the scene. It seems that singing in Spanish and talking about what we were talking about was a joke to them. We struggled to keep the band going, do records, and tour like everyone else, though it became really hard to do anything and figure out who was genuinely helping us and who was just jerking us around. Our flyers were ripped off of walls, our records were hidden in the bins so they would not sell. Despite this, some

people threw their support behind us and we kept going. Ivan finally threw in the towel. He was tired of being in the USA away from his wife and kid and went back to Peru. Francisco moved with his family to San Francisco and I kept the band going. New people came in. Eventually we met Los Crudos, did a split EP and went on a national tour. All done with the effort of a group of wetbacks doing DIY punk.

I met my partner Jane and started a relationship. Eventually we talked about my legal status. It was decided we would get married and see if I could get documents. This was in 1992. I had done many jobs at this point: painting, sanding, refinishing floors, handing flyers, washing dishes, and eventually got trained as a chef. What followed was a six-year legal battle with immigration, who lost my documents twice, restarted a deportation process against me, charged me thousands in fees and generally treated me like nothing more than an undesirable A-number. I learned to stay low when needed, and to avoid an arrest that could jeopardize my legal status. When touring we stayed away from the border, avoided towns even though we would do well there just so that we could avoid checkpoints. I stopped doing Critical Mass when they started arresting people. The band members who were citizens always kept an eye on things. If we went through a check point only the white Americans would get in the driver and passenger seat the rest of us would sit in the back.

So, Jane and I went through all this legal bullshit. And I had a chance. We saw so many cases where people did not have a chance and they would get detained, deported... just for lacking a piece of paper or just because *la migra* did not believe part of their story. But we stuck it out and eventually I became a green card holder or a "legal alien resident," got a social security card, and got on the books at work. Now at least I could get some of my tax refunds. Because if you pay taxes but you do it under a fake number or any other such thing you get no refunds—then on top of that you have to take shit from the racists saying that you don't pay taxes. When I became legal we started to dream big—touring outside the USA. We did the Mexico tour, went through a lineup change, and went back to having band members with legal document problems. So we have not been able to tour outside the USA since.

Things come and go, people come and go. But we keep fighting for what we believe in and talking about who we are. I am a USA citizen now (dual citizen of USA and Colombia, actually) but I am always dealing with the immigration system. I petitioned to legalize my mom. The INS claimed my mom was *not* my mom because her first name was missing from my birth certificate. It took more than a year to get it all sorted out. All my family members have had to deal with this ridiculous system. My partner Jane has always stuck it out and fought side by side with me and my family every step of the way and has been fighting for other immigrants' rights for years.

"Things come and go, people come and go but we keep fighting for what we believe in and talking about who we are."

To tell you the truth, people who want to end immigration are fighting a lost war. People moving around has always and will always happen. Borders are fallacies made up by politicians, wars, landlords, racists, and imperialists. Borders make no sense. Countries, their flags, their maps are irrelevant. If those who hate immigrants so much really wanted to make a difference they should fight to end free trade agreements, to promote fair trade, to end imperialist intervention of first world countries, to end the IMF and the World Bank, to promote fair and just unions, fair wages everywhere. They should refuse to buy sweatshop clothes, CDS, cars, food, etc, etc.

The world is becoming smaller and smaller—we can take planes anywhere more easily than ever before. Now I can buy a $2 phone card and call anywhere in the world for up to two hours. The internet has brought us closer to each other, anywhere in the world. It is really scary time for racists, imperialists, and the sort. The working class people of the world get to know each other, communicate, and support each other more easily than before, while they consolidate their elitist power. Fear is one of their few weapons and stirring fears around a group of people who want nothing more at times than to work and live is a desperate attempt to distract from real problems and to kept us divided and fighting each other.

We are punks, we are every day more and more. The world is not a homogenous place. We are all different, speak many languages, sing about different issues that affect us. We just happen to have had to move around.

YEAP OF PISSCHRIST

Interviewed by Esneider at ABC No Rio in New York City on July 7, 2007.

photo: Will Kinser

So, what is your name?
My name is Yeap and I sing in Pisschrist, a band from Melbourne, Australia.

How long have you been in Melbourne?
I have been in Melbourne probably about five or six years now. I first got to know about the Melbourne punk scene when Warsaw came to Malaysia. My band back then, Mass Separation, played a few shows with them. Then I started to get more interested in the Australian punk scene. I kept in contact with the bass player of that band. Then finally after many years of saving a lot I made it there in 2002. That is when I met my band members Tim, Jim, and Dave—you know I fell in love with the scene there. They all lived in a warehouse called the Pink Palace, which went on for seven years. That is where we did DIY shows. We had a big stage. Seven of us lived there together.

You say you were involved in the punk scene in Malaysia, what did you do there?
A number of things. In Malaysia, punk is synonymous with activism. I did play in a band called Mass Separation. Me and a few friends started the first chapter of Food Not Bombs, in Kuala Lumpur. Now there are chapters in five other states. I was also involved in doing some blockading work.

What kind of blockading?
All these construction companies in Malaysia have been privatized but they're actually owned by the prime minister's brother-in-law and other members of government. All this privatization is bullshit. They were going to do build a dam on top of indigenous land, a 1,500-year old burial ground, where people have been living for a long time. They were going to displace them and take them higher up, put them in concrete boxes. To an area where they were to become a tourist attraction. You know, tourists could come and see them, buy handicrafts, etc. We did blockading for that. That was a big active movement, we were only one part of it, we did the blockading but there were a lot of other people working on it like artists, filmmakers, etc.

How do you contrast that kind of activism that you were part of in Malaysia to what you found in the Australian punk scene?
I find that in the Australian punk scene, in a way, there are more things you can do. There is more time, more resources, you have more freedom to say something without getting locked up or suffering consequences. I think people take these things for granted. For most people, it is a music-

based thing, which is not necessarily wrong. Some people are involved in the punk scene only for music but they are deeply passionate about it, and do lots of things for the punk scene.

Did you speak English when you first moved to Australia?
Yes, I did. Malaysia had been colonized by the British until 1954, when we got independence. So my parents' generation for example all had British schooling. In Malaysia as in most parts of Asia people have this stigma you know, you need to speak English to actually survive and make money. People are really poor, Malaysia is still a third world country but things are better than they used to be. People still think that we need to be more "Westernized."

When I first moved to the USA I did not speak English. In Colombia we had this whole thing about learning a foreign language but it did not work too well. So I had to learn English. I came from the Colombian punk scene and it took me a while to get into the USA punk scene, I didn't feel comfortable...
Like I said, I went to Melbourne in 2002 and got to know Tim, Dave, and Jim, and we never stopped contacting each other even when I went home for a while to make money and to get all my stuff. They've always welcomed me with open arms, never made me feel like I was any different or anything—I mean, of course there are differences, cultural differences, but they have always made me feel like I am part of them, that is why I felt like this might not be the biggest punk scene in the world but I feel I belong there sometimes even more than back in Malaysia.

Do you sing in your native language?
When I want to write about issues, like about hope, and about how I feel about things, I'm kind of writing to my friends back home, so I write in Malay. And it's great when we did our first Southeast Asian tour we went back there, and all our friends, and it was kind of like a periodic writing about this one time in Malaysia and everybody got it, and it was great.

Do you feel homesick?
I miss my parents. I miss Malaysian food—I miss tempeh and tofu and hot chile.

I have to ask, document-wise, how difficult was it to move? Because you're traveling here, so I assume you can travel, you must have status.
It was really hard to get into this country [the USA]. They first detained me because I had a Malaysian passport. I spent $180 applying for a visa. My Australian counterparts did not have to do anything. They did not have to prove anything. I had to prove I had a job I was returning to... I have a partner back in Australia, I had to show I had a bond, a house bond, stuff that is like. This is none of your fucking business, why do I have to disclose this shit to you? That was one. And when we got here from Japan I was detained, they took my passport, they wanted to cross-reference and ask me how much money I have just to make sure I am not going to stay in the country, then they worked out, "Hey this guy came from Australia, he flew to Japan and now he is flying here with three Australians with instruments," so they detained me for three hours and they asked me a lot of questions. Six fucking big guys and women around me saying, "Your wife must not like you very much since she gave you this badass haircut, and let you go off for three months."

What about going into Australia? How was that?
I went there as a student. Back in Malaysia I

photo: Matthew Juarez

worked as an artist, an animator. When I got to Melbourne I got a job editing surf videos, and at the same time I studied. I saved up all my money in Malaysia to study animation. Then I met my partner Camilla, we went out for two years and we decided that to stay we have to do something. So we got a de facto visa.

What does that mean?
It means you are in a marriage-like situation but you are not actually married.

We don't even have that here.
Well, that is the thing—I had to pick married when I wanted to come into the country. The de facto marriage was made so...Australia does not recognize gay marriages but they will recognize people have partnerships so that is the de facto thing. So anyway, it took us two years to apply for this visa, and in this time we had to get things like our house bond, telephone bills, electricity bills in both our names, pictures, testimonials from our parents, our friends.

I went through the same thing here.
Even interviews, they asked things like, "When was the first time you guys had sex" and, "Your housemate, what color car does she drive," then they cross-check everything. I got a temporary visa now, like a probation visa to see if you are really... See, we had to have a two-year relationship before we could actually apply for the visa and we have to be together for two and a half years more, so in a year's time I'll have a full visa.

Do you think that Australian punks understand the kind of hell they put you through so that you can come to their country? When they, like your bandmates, don't need to do anything to travel or to come to the USA? Do you think they understand those differences?
They sympathize, really, but I do not know if they understand. And I don't expect anyone to understand, you know? I guess every immigrant to some country would have the same kind of experience as me. I think people who have migrated to other countries would understand because there is so much you have to prove about yourself, you know, sometimes you have to hang your head low.

Is there a Malaysian community in Australia?
Yeah there is; a lot of them are students. The sad thing is a lot of them, they just come and study, and they go home, and they don't take the time to learn about other people's culture or anything like that. It's really important if you go somewhere else to actually learn about someone else's culture too, but without forgetting your own. I think that going somewhere and keeping to your own group is isolating.
It happens with Colombians here. They come and stay for 20 or 25 years but keep thinking that they will go back next week. They don't learn English. We have a large Colombian community here. I can shop at a Colombian store, work at a Colombian factory... It is like I never really left but you are making dollars. I call it a ghetto mentality. They stay in the Colombian ghetto. It is voluntary because it would take a little effort to get out there...
Also, Australia is a really white country. Although it's also a black country, it has black history. I used to work as a social researcher. What we do is call people and

ask questions and some of the older white folks are really, really convinced that Australia is a white country. It is the same thing I felt about America before we came here. It portrays itself as a really white country...
White Christian...
Yeah, and I think it can become kind of isolating. In Malaysia, we more or less speak each others' languages. There are a lot immigrants in Malaysia. For example, my ancestors came from China to avoid the Japanese genocide. So I guess it was always multicultural. We know a bit about each other's cultures and we live in close proximity to each other, so we talk, we learn, and we embrace. It wasn't always like that, either. But I think the difference is in Australia there is a big Vietnamese community, a big Italian community, Greek and Middle Eastern, Lebanese community, African community but everyone just speaks English to each other. There is no learning of each other's cultures.

Religion, do you have any religion?
No. Do you?

No, my parents were atheists so I was raised atheist.
My parents are Buddhist, but they told me at a very young age, you know, when you grow up you can choose whatever religion or whatever, just as long as you're a good person.

Just you?
(laughter) ...Yeah, it's a pretty white punk scene.
I mean here you saw today…
Yeah, this is one thing I really like about the American punk scene. Like I said earlier, America portrays itself as a really white country but when we were in LA, and other places in California, I was really happy to see, hey, actually I'm not the only one, there were Asian kids, Latino kids, African-American kids—it was great you know?

It was not what you are used to...
No.

What about Malaysia?
Coming from a Chinese heritage, I was also one of the minority.

I know a lot of Europeans have moved to Malaysia because of work and other things. Are there white people in the punk scene?
No. I know the guitarist of Extreme Noise Terror has moved to Singapore to work and occasionally he comes out to play music with the local punks, but no, not really...
What about other people that come to Malaysia... Do you consider yourself second generation? Third generation, longer than that?
Uh, fourth.

Are there any first generation Chinese kids in the punk scene, kids from Singapore in the scene?
No...

There is not much migration in the scene?
No.

photo: Matthew Juarez

And I have to ask: post-September 11, has there been any anti-immigrant stuff in Australia?
Definitely now it is making it really hard for people. Now I have to prove more about myself. So in a way my immigration status was affected by September 11. It is becoming a really paranoid country.

Australia is one of the countries in the "coalition of the willing."
Yeah, it is one of the "allies." There have been a lot of crackdowns in Middle Eastern communities, midnight raids into family homes and random arrests. And groups of rednecks going out in the suburbs and attacking Middle Eastern people, or people who they are racial profiling, brown skin, anyone who is not white basically...

I read about those incidents on the beach...
Cronulla....

Yeah, Cronulla, that there was this whole thing of racist mobs, organizing through mobile phone texting, like vigilante groups beating up Muslim kids...
Yeah.

What has been the response of the community?
The community...the response has been more to hold workshops to help non-Muslim people understand what Islam is more about. That not everyone is a terrorist or something. There have been lots of actions too done by the left-wing activist community because of this guy they call Jihad Jack in Australia. He is a white Muslim convert. He was put in Guantanamo Bay and now he is back in Australia and he is facing persecution. And there is a lot of legal action, legal aid help and stuff, which is working really closely with a lot of activists and the Muslim community and stuff like that.

In Australia, besides yourself how much of the punk scene is immigrant?

Where is the most migration to and from? Do people go to Singapore to work?
The problem is that in Malaysia there is not much work, especially for my generation; everyone is just jobless and... I would not be here if I was still in Malaysia.

You would not be able to do the things...
I would not be able to afford it. I would not be able to afford anything. It is so much more painful when you try to do something different, like even play punk music—you get cracked down by the cops. Something like this [ABC No Rio] would never happen, the cops would come down and this place would be gone in a minute. It would not last 25 years.

What other political movements are going on in Malaysia that you know of?
Anti-Fascist Action, Food Not Bombs... I have not been back for some time so I can't really say.

Yeah, it is the same thing that happens to me. I am not totally sure about everything in Colombia when I go back. I don't even know the currency anymore. How much the bus is... Has that happened to you?? Or you haven't been away long enough?
No, not long enough, I don't forget the currency, I still remember a lot of things. But it's getting cheaper to fly back to Malaysia so I

think I'm going to try my best to go back there a lot. My parents are getting old so I want to go visit them.

Do you have brothers and sisters too?
My younger brother is in Australia too, and I'm the eldest, my other brother is in Germany. My parents work really hard. In Malaysia we don't have any welfare or anything... Also, because we are of Chinese heritage, we don't get the same kind of ...

Social security?
Yeah.

Even if they are third-generation born and raised in Malaysia?
Right.

Inside Malaysia they are still considered ethnic Chinese?
Yeah. It says, or it doesn't say anymore but it used to say in my national ID what race I am.

Really? In Colombia they do it by skin color: white, medium white, dark brown, light brown, etc.
What about slanty eyes?

No, but it will say how tall you are, if you have any marks that identify you, tattoos...
Well, they did that in America when I came in. They took pictures of all my tattoos. They made me take my shirt off and took pictures and wrote everything down.

Do you feel there are cultural differences with how you deal with your family compared to Australians, and like what? I can tell you that we Latinos, or more like a Colombian or as a Paisa, we are usually close to our parents. It has to do with money sometimes because you just can't afford to leave home. Sometimes you build a second floor in your parents' house for you to live. While Americans tend to live away from each other.
Yeah, it's the same in Australia. If it was up to my Mom I would still be living at home. For Asians, even when you get married you live with your family, you bring your husband back or your wife back home to live. One big happy family. I guess because in Malaysia, as in most of Asia, there are so many people and you have to live in close proximity. You learn how to deal with not having that much space.

Same thing for us. It might not be good sometimes but it creates this closeness.
Yeah, it creates this closeness. You learn to deal with people more, understand people's differences. I mean in Australia there is so much space. It is huge. Though it is the smallest continent in the world, there's so much space.

What are you planning for the future? Do you think you will go back to Malaysia one day?
I think that definitely one day I will go back. Definitely it is a place that needs more input. When I was into punk rock back home we never got anything. It all depends on people—we would write to people and they would make us mix tapes. Punks in Asia have no record players, it is all tapes. Now CDs are starting to pick up but they are still really expensive. But yeah, I would go back there start a venue, if possible, an all-ages venue, a safe place for punks and kids to come and see a show and not to get fucked up by the cops like I am used to.

What about your partner, how does she feel about going to Malaysia?
We have thought about maybe we would go back there for a year or two then go back to Australia. She is Italian, of Italian heritage, so she is very close with her family too. I am Asian so we have strong family bonds so... Her family says, oh no, you have to stay here, and my family says...

Yeah, my partner too goes to Colombia with me and says "I love it here, I want to live here six months of the year" but in the back of my mind I am thinking how am I going to make a living here?
I work as an animator in Melbourne and lecture at the university on animation too, that allows me to travel and I don't have to put on a mask, or hide my tattoos or hide my haircut, or how I look. I just walk up to work like how I am. I would never get a job in Malaysia like that.

In Colombia too. And the political situation... I know someone in Colombia who taught at the university and a death squad member came to her class and sat down to see what she was teaching to make sure she was not saying anything against the government.
Yeah, I have a lot of leeway to design my own curriculum, I can say things I want to say. If some kids want to do something more political or actually questioning something I'm able to encourage them. I am not able to do that back at home. It is a different mindset too, because back home people are more thinking like, it's really materialistic in Malaysia, I think people are forgetting...you have to think about the politics too, because if you're just heading into this whole Westernization, like consuming and working and working, because people are thinking I don't want to be poor anymore, I gotta work, I gotta work. People are missing the point, like hang on, we are losing our identity, losing everything.

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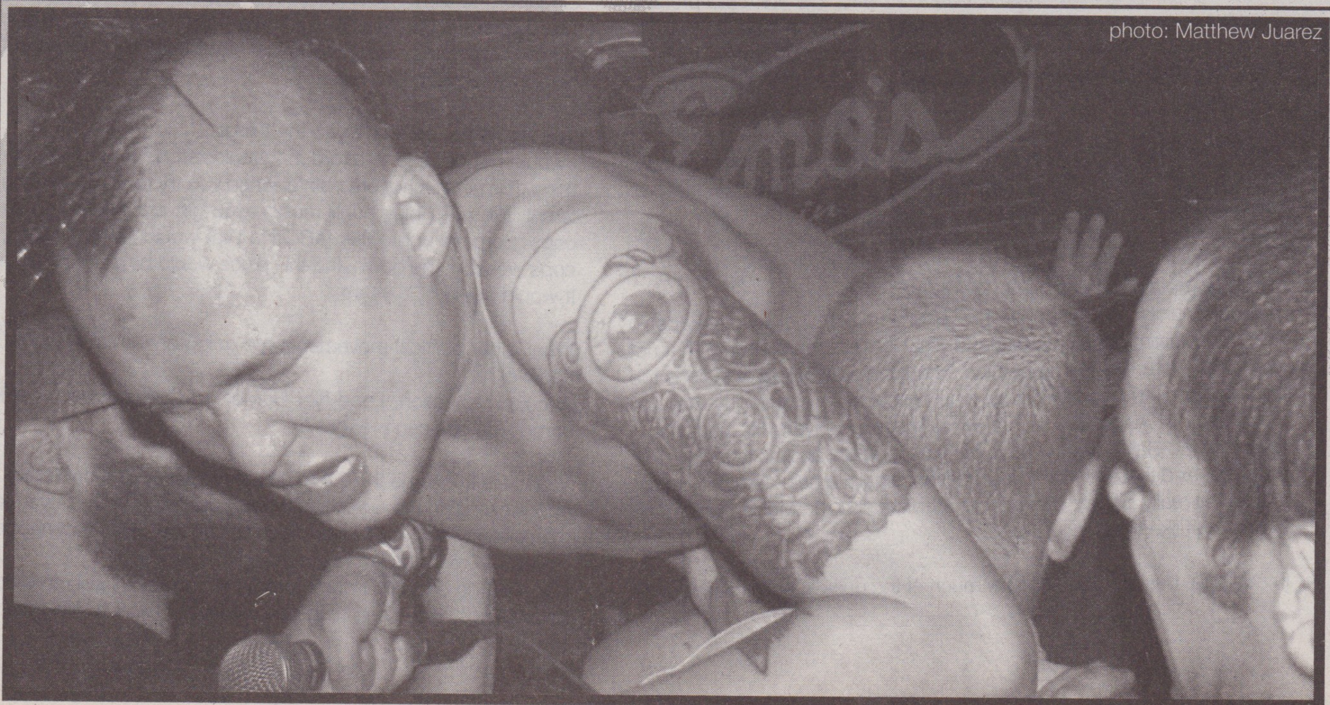


photo: Matthew Juarez

FLOR: RESISTING DEPORTATION

(Interviewed on July 24, 2007, in Manhattan, by Jane G.)

I came from Mexico, sixteen years ago, with my mom and my dad, when I was twelve-years old, basically with the same thoughts that many immigrants have, to look for something better, for a better life, better resources, something different than what we had there. That was mostly the drive my parents had to come here.

We sold everything, left everything behind there. My dad came first, to try to get a job, a place to live, get settled in. Then my mom and I came. We came with visiting visas, we came with a six-month visa, but we knew we wanted to make things work here.

That was sixteen years ago. After six months, the visas expired. And my mom tried renewing the visa, but it got denied. And then she tried again shortly after that, and it got denied again. And then they basically made a decision to stay here, thinking that they were going to figure out a way to fix the situation, or get a lawyer or solve it somehow.

I did not speak English. I spoke very little, because in Mexico they teach you very little English in school, and I had no idea of what I was doing. I went to a public school in Jackson Heights, and the cultural shock was very hard, coming from Mexico. There were people in Jackson Heights from India, and Colombians, Ecuadorans, Puerto Ricans... all these different kids from all these different countries, and that in itself was really difficult for me. It was a shock. I didn't speak English, it was a completely different school system for me, and it was very difficult to adjust. When you're twelve, leaving everything you know behind, coming here, living in a different place, in a smaller apartment, you know, really struggling to get jobs, and my parents had to get jobs, just starting from zero was really hard.

My parents had to work all kinds of jobs. They are professionals, they have degrees and stuff, and they came and my dad was working in a deli in midtown—for tips, not even any minimum wage, in the winter—you know, like many immigrants who come here have to do. My mom was cleaning hotels and working random office jobs, just to make things happen, just to have some income. My dad worked at a factory having to be around dangerous chemicals and we worried about his health, but he had to do it, because he didn't have any papers, so those were the only jobs he could get. And the winters were hard, the first time I saw snow, it was so cold. That didn't help with my mood.

To deal with the visa situation, my mom and dad tried right away to get lawyers. They got lawyers—many, many lawyers. They went in to see a lot of people, spent a lot of money—so much money—just trying to fix the situation, trying to figure out a way. And everyone told them, no, you can't do it. And then my dad had an opportunity to try to get sponsored by his job. It was really emotionally hard for him to go to his job and ask them. And they said, yeah, we'll help you. And they went through the process where they put an ad in the newspaper, saying you have to compete with any American citizen, who is better suited for your job than this immigrant. They were in the process of that, and then they fired him. I guess they decided not to help him anymore.

I remember at this point in my life, my dad sunk into a really heavy depression. He was very, very depressed for a long time after that. And that was a struggle too, my mom and me to help him out, we had to deal with that.

My parents, along with trying to make this work, and trying to do things right, getting lawyers, and trying to figure out loopholes, etc., they've also been paying taxes for over ten years. So they always made sure they took all the steps to guarantee that somehow they would be OK one day, or if a situation arose that they could fix it, they would have a good track record of how it should be here.

It's really hard, spending thousands of dollars on lawyers, always with the hope that something's going to happen, something's going to happen, like year after year, my mom, she calls me, "Oh there's a new law," and it just keeps the hope alive. Or, "Oh, there's a new organization, they're going to help us," and paying hundreds and hundreds of dollars for a consultation fee, only to have them say, no, there's nothing we can do. So we were always confronted with that wall. It was always an emotional roller coaster. We would have hope, and any new news that would come out of immigration laws, or bills that were going to be passed, or promises by the government of things changing, it was always a hope for us. Or going to see a new lawyer, having hope in that. And I think we wanted to fix the situation so bad, and we were hoping so bad it would change, so we always kept hope alive. But we would constantly face the disappointment that nothing ever happened, that nothing ever changed. And that was really hard emotionally for all of us.

And for me personally it's been hard, coming here as a twelve-year old and having to grow up here, and being a teenager here, and going to high school. I learned English, and started making friends... and I grew up here, this is my home, just as much as anyone else. I feel I have rights just as any other person that grew up here, but it's been really hard for me to feel I have the same rights, like being able to travel, being able to work. Seeing my friends taking trips, like going to Europe, that is really hard on me, to know that I can't travel; it's like I'm in jail. And feeling like a big part of my teenage years, and my youth, I was held back in a lot of ways, in a lot of different things, because of my immigration status, that was really, really hard. And just watching everything around me just develop naturally, but I have all these restrictions. And I think that's really hard for a lot of immigrants, having that wall, having that barrier there, between you and everybody else.

College has been a big issue as well. I can't get financial aid and I can't get grants. All of these things have stopped me from making my goals come true, or certain dreams that I've had come true. I've had to put them on a shelf until something happens. So it's hard keeping all that hope alive for so long, you know. And I've felt bitter, hurt, and angry. And at some point I was like, nothing's going to happen, nothing's going to change, you know, I kind of go up and down on giving up hope, and keeping it alive.

Another thing is the separation of my family. I have family in Colombia and Mexico. My mother is Colombian, and she hasn't seen her family in over 25 years—before because she was in Mexico, and after that because we've been here. And my father has been able to see his family when they come to Florida or some neutral place where we were able to go. But it's been very, very isolated. Recently my grandfather died, and my grandmother came into the United States. I have an uncle in New Mexico, and he invited us to come visit him, and it was the only opportunity we were going to have to see my grandmother. Our traveling has been very lim-

ited, I haven't been on a plane in something like ten years. My parents and I have always been really careful in how we travel, when we travel, the forms of traveling, the places we go to—it's usually very local, maybe an hour or two by car. We decided to go to New Mexico, to visit my grandmother, we weren't even thinking about flying, since after 9/11 the security became even stricter, so we decided to take Amtrak, because it was the only option we had.

We went with the fear that something might happen, a feeling of paranoia that many immigrants feel all the time. I have lived with paranoia the whole time I've been here. It's paranoia that my mom, my dad, and I—and I'm sure a lot of immigrants—deal with on a daily basis. It's fear of going on a train and seeing a cop or something that makes you think: Are they going to get me? Are they going to ask me for my ID? Is that going to snowball into asking me for my immigration status? The cops aren't INS officers, but an immigrant feels it that way, an immigrant feels it as a fear that they're going to get us. That's a feeling that's really, really hard to live with, every day of your life. Every time you try to go for a job, every time you try to do anything that requires something to do with papers, or governments.

We decided to try to put that on the side a little bit, and to say: we have the right to go see our family, the little that we can, you know. So we took the Amtrak train, and going there, everything was fine. Thankfully everything went OK—we took the trip, and it was nice. We were there for two weeks, and it was really good. On the way back we were six hours away from New York City in Rochester, New York, it was 7:30 in the morning, and my mom and I were sleeping, stretched out on two seats each but one next to the other with the walkway in between. My dad was in the next seat behind us. I just remember hearing someone speaking loudly, and it was the Border Patrol, asking my dad for his papers. I just remember thinking *shit*. Fuck. My first instinct was just: man, what the fuck! And I remember I peeked really quickly to see if my mom was sleeping, I didn't know if she was aware of what was going on yet, and all this fear just came, all the fear, and confusion, but I tried to keep a straight mind, deal with it, not lose control of my emotions. Then I remember thinking really quickly that I should pretend to be sleeping, because he had passed by me and my mother and hadn't said anything to us. And I remember he was kind of right behind us, but he couldn't see us. And I just whispered to my mom, "just pretend you're sleeping, just stay like that, don't move." And at that moment I knew my mom already knew what was going on. And that was just a very intense, hard moment, to know that both my mom and I were in this situation where we knew we just had to not move, and pretend to be asleep, but at the same time, it was like oh shit, they caught my dad. And then they asked my dad, where's your ID, and he showed his license, which he had since years ago when it was easier, when you could just go in and get your license, and the Border Patrol asked well, where's your visa, don't you have any other ID? And my dad said, I don't have it with me. And then the Border Patrol started bombarding him, how did you get into the country, when did you come in, and my dad obviously didn't want to lie, and I'm sure it was very awkward, and fast, everything happened so fast, and he is here sixteen years. And then all I heard the officer say, was "you're going to have to step to the back of the train with me." So he wanted to ask him more questions. And at that moment, I knew that he was caught. I just knew it. The other thing was that he had all of our tickets in his pocket. So I think what happened is the Border Patrol asked him if he was with anyone else, or if he was traveling alone, and it was especially hard, because as much as I found out later my father wanted to say, "I'm alone," it was a moment where he was really afraid, really scared, and he didn't know what to do. Like, do I just walk away from my family and pretend I don't know them? Is the Border Patrol going to go through my pockets, or look at the passenger list, and go, "your wife is traveling with you." And at that moment, he said, my family is here. And I think it would have happened anyway, they would have known somehow. Eventually they would have gone through the list, and figured out. And my dad woke us up. And his face had just changed. And the Border Patrol said, gather all your things, we're getting off the train. And everyone was just looking at us, like, "oh my god." And the Border Patrol officer went ahead, because he had to "take care" of other people, there were other people that he had to talk to, other travelers, so my mom and I gathered everything really quickly, and my dad went ahead a little bit, and I just remember my mom sat next to me for a second, on the Amtrak train with all our stuff on us, and we just held hands and we looked at each other. And it was really this unknown thing. But it was a very intense moment with my mother and I, where we were like, "We've got to be strong." And we don't know what's going to happen, we had no idea whether we were going to go to jail, whether that was it, whether we were going to be separated, whether we were going to be deported that day, we had no idea. But it was a very intense moment with my mom and I. We hugged, and then we had to get off the train.

"I learned English, started making friends, and I grew up here, this is my home, just as much as anyone else."

There were seven other people they had taken off the train. And they kept us there for a while, they had a list, and they were checking the list. And then they took us to the immigration office, it was like: you're all detained, right now, until I check all your stuff out. So we're in the back of this van, and my dad at this point isn't saying anything. He just has a blank expression, didn't say anything. My mom, at this point, starts freaking out. She starts having a small panic attack, because her fear is being in jail, and she's like, my whole family is here with me, and we're caught. So I

had to calm her down, kind of be strong, and be there for her.

We got taken to this place, and they interrogated us all. They took our fingerprints, to send to the FBI, to check our records out. They just interrogated us all, one by one, like how did you come, when did you come, how long have you been here, where do you live, everything. And then they check, and the computer comes back with the records, and you know, we don't have any criminal records, we were fine.

There were two Mexican guys in a holding cell, from the Amtrak train the night before, and immigration came to take them away to jail, and this in front of everyone, we saw the whole thing. And then I started to freak out, seeing this, that here they were taking these two men away to jail, with the handcuffs, and the chains on their waists, and that was really hard, because I was worried about what would happen to us, because I was with my mother, and my father, and I was worried about them, and I was also worried about these men, and everyone around me, and to me, politically, it was very hard for me, to watch these men's freedom being taken away right in front of me. And with the uncertainty of what was going to happen to me and my family, and everyone else there. So that was very hard. And my mom just told me to look at her, to distract me, because she could see that I was feeling very emotional about it. And so they took them away, and after they checked us all out, and they basically sat us down, and said, well, you have three choices: one is you sign a paper right now that you want to go back to your country. That was the first choice. Two, you could ask to apply for political asylum. Three, you sign a paper right now saying that you want to go appear in front of a judge, to go to court. And they expect you to make the decision right there. They're like, those are your choices, make the decision. So my dad was like, can I have a minute to talk to my family about it? Can we have a minute to talk about it?

And of course, after sixteen years of life and everything we have here, it's not easy saying, we'll just go back right now, that's not really a choice. So that was out. Political asylum? It's very hard, especially after you've been here sixteen years, it's difficult to prove you left the country for political reasons. So we said we would go before a judge. And because we didn't have any criminal records, because my father told them they had been paying taxes for years, and because we were together, we were all traveling as a family, they decided to let us go, with signing a paper saying we were going to go back to court. But what also happened in this time, these two Border Patrol officers... I do have to say, as much as I don't like them—they didn't mistreat us, they didn't push us around, they didn't curse at us, they didn't treat us with disrespect, they were real respectful, and were being as nice as they could be in the situation. So I think in a way we kind of got lucky, because obviously we all know about stories where they do treat you really badly—they treat women really badly, and they push people around. So we got lucky in that way.

And this was on a Sunday, and apparently their supervisor was on the phone, telling them that they should detain all of the people. The supervisor said, I think you should detain everyone until tomorrow, and when I come in we'll deal with it. And they hung up the phone, and one of the officers told the other one, in front of all of us: "Well, I don't think we should follow his orders. I think we need to make the decision, because we're here and we're interviewing them, and tomorrow we'll stand up to him." And I though, whatever, that's good, we want to get out of here. Maybe these two particular Border Patrol officers were different, or having a good day, or whatever it was. But we got lucky. So we signed the paper, and they took one last picture of the three of us, they took all our pictures, and they said, "If you don't show up to court, there will be a warrant out for your arrest right away, and you'll become fugitives. So you better show up to court." And of course they know where we live, they have our IDs, they have everything, and I think that whole thing is obviously intimidation, it's their tactic for intimidating immigrants. Intimidating them to either flee and want to take voluntary departure, or say I don't want to deal with this system, I don't want to fight this, this is too much, I can't go against this system, against this government. Obviously, all these tactics work through intimidation. And the moment they said that, it's obvious that they want us to be afraid, and have fear, and feel intimidated. And it is scary. It is scary for someone to tell you that there will be a warrant out for your arrest, and that you'll become a fugitive.

I think that happens to a lot of immigrants, they do go away. They may have a language barrier, either people don't speak good English, or they don't have the means to get really good help, for a lawyer, don't have the money, or they're just scared, and they go away, give up, move back.

The reason why I decided to fight this, and not go away or do voluntary departure, is because I feel like I'm fighting it not only for myself, but for all the immigrants that get intimidated, that have language barriers, or they don't have enough money to afford a good lawyer. And I feel like I'm fighting this fight for all those immigrants that do go away. So whether I win this or not, I want to know that I fought this. I think this is the biggest fight of my life, against this system and this government. That's why I'm doing it.

Maybe my fight and my struggle will inspire other people to fight this system of oppression just like I have been inspired from others, maybe it will give other people hope that we are strong and we have power and that it will not be easy to get rid of us. I am tired of living in this golden cage where the streets aren't sprinkled with gold and there is no freedom. I will fight this until the end. The hope is in me that one day all of the people will truly be free. Keep fighting.

"...Politically, it was very hard for me to watch these men's freedom being taken away right in front of me...with the uncertainty of what was going to happento me and my family and everyone else there."

SHAUNYA: AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT VIEW ON IMMIGRATION...

It is often forgotten that the United States is only 231 years old. In just a little over 200 years the United States has managed to wipe out almost all original occupants of this country, and yet present-day "Americans" feel superior to others who would like to be a part of this country. To put it in perspective, everyone that is not an American Indian is an immigrant.

I am indigenous to this country. I am a full-blooded Dine Indian. Full-blooded Indian meaning that I have no other lineage except for my tribal affiliation. My ancestors have been here for thousands and thousands of years. Almost every person can go back four generations and see that their family migrated here from another country. Not me, I can go back thousands of years and know that I am from this land.

I was born and raised on an Indian reservation. Hardship is an understatement when it comes to American Indians. When the initial immigrants—the founding fathers—came to our land, they brought with them disease, violence, and greed. The relentless force to take land came fast, and because most tribes were not violent people the genocide happened quickly. We were forced onto lands that were designated as reservations and forced to attend Boarding Schools where we had to learn English. The goal was to assimilate Indians and force us to lose our traditional values. The damage is catastrophic and permanent when a group of people is forced to lose their self-identity.

At a very young age I knew that I would stand up for the rights of all oppressed people. I am a feminist and an activist. This is why I latched onto the punk scene. The ethics of the punk scene fueled my rage against government, capitalism, and authority. At age sixteen I started promoting punk shows on my reservation. I brought in bands such as Los Crudos, Lagwagon, Plinko, Fighting Cause, Riot Gun, Primitive Tribes, Weston, and many more. It was the punk scene that led me to my travels into Mexico.

It was after one particular show in Flagstaff, AZ when I decided to go to Mexico. I was good friends with the bands State of Fear and Assrash. I did a show for them in Flagstaff and that is when my friends and I decided to travel to Mexico to see their next show. It would be my first trip across the border but definitely not my last.

I had absolutely no preconceived expectation about Mexico. When I arrived, I was ecstatic. It was an exciting place. I felt at home in Mexico and got along with the punks. We were so comfortable there that we began going back to Mexico every weekend. We gained a strong understanding of the struggles that they faced and started participating in their rallies against the border. I could relate to Mexicans—they faced impossible odds just like my people yet they continued to fight. I could not understand the barriers that were being placed upon them. What's the difference between them crossing now and the invasion that took place 200 years ago? The only difference is that these "immigrants" are less destructive.

Ultimately everything comes down to basic human rights. No one will ever convince me that letting people die in the desert while trying to better their lives is OK. Indians welcomed and helped the first immigrants. What if Indians did not help the families of all those people who so righteously claim citizenship? Perhaps helping was to our detriment but the fact remains that this country was built on immigration. Therefore my view will always be that I welcome Mexicans and all immigrants. Nothing but good can come from diversity. It is time to shake up white America and finally make them the minority. With any luck it'll happen in my lifetime.

MARIPOSA

Interviewed on July 24, 2007, in Manhattan, by Jane G.

So I've been involved in punk in some way for a long time now, since before immigrating here to the United States [from Mexico]. The decision to immigrate was after President Salinas de Gortari left office, the one who signed NAFTA and fucked over the country even more than it already was... It's a classic situation after each president leaves office, but this one outdid himself in being a thieving rat—with apologies to rats.

The situation in the country was getting more difficult. Someone offered my *compañero* the chance to come and work in the US for a while and he came. Later I came with my daughter and we crossed the border without any problems since we had a tourist visa, but then we stayed and that's when the struggle began. "What struggle?" you may ask. Well, to start with, I didn't speak English; I listened to people talking and stood there thinking hmmm, do I smile or what? I didn't know anyone, and I got so bored until I started going to school to learn English. There, I began to get to know people and hear so many stories. Some of us don't struggle so much to cross the border, but others really do. Not only that, but people go through so many terrible humiliations, it's sad to listen to everything that so many people are suffering.

We were living in a really small town, so we decided to go to the nearest city and look there for a record store and for shows, and we found them. In the beginning everyone smiled at us and was very friendly but no one spoke to us because I believe they thought we didn't know English—and, well, the truth is we didn't really, we were just starting to learn. But we met two friends who could speak Spanish and who started to introduce us to more and more people. As a result, our English got better

(although we are still working on that). And to tell the truth, the people here treat us really well; we have never felt that any divisions exist, which is something that I like a lot.

The difference between the punk scene here where I'm currently living and in the city where I'm from is that it seems like more people here are involved with political activities and with music and instruments, since here there is more access to material things than there. Outside the scene in daily life I have had to deal with racist people, especially after 9/11 with all those nationalist ideas that the mass media puts in people's brains, but you know what makes me sadder and angrier is when it comes from people with Latin American origins.

And also, as for papers, hehehe, well, I don't have any and it's difficult finding jobs and usually they're in the same places, whether it be in some kitchen, or cleaning. Until now I have had good co-workers but I have seen how some people treat others unjustly only because they don't speak English. And to tell the truth, I don't know how long I will be here. I like the city where I live since I am doing things that I like to do. The only bad thing is that because I don't have papers I can't travel to see my family, and that makes me sad. I especially think about my parents and I know they are getting old and I would like to be with them. They do come to visit me and stay for a time but it isn't the same. I would like to have the freedom to go to different countries; I don't want to always be in this situation—that is, not leaving this country—because I know I can't return. So for now I'm here and later we'll see what we do.

With feet on the ground, and hands held high!

RUPERT OF ESKAPO

Were you in the punk scene in your country before or after you migrated?
My name is Rupert, I sing for the Bay Area punk band Eskapo. I wouldn't say I was in an actual scene. I went to shows at this place along EDSA Boulevard in Quezon City called People's Park. My first show was Philippine Violators, WUDS, and about ten other bands whose names I can't recall.
Growing up in the Philippines as a teen in the early '90s meant they would play death metal on radio stations like NU 107. I heard bands like Cannibal Corpse and Morbid Angel, thrash metal like early Metallica, Death Angel, and Testament as well as local Pinoy bands like the Philippine Violators, Bad Omen, Tame the Tikbalang, WUDS, IOV, and other bands who were around at the time and belonged to a label called Twisted Red Cross Records. I wasn't cool enough to hang out with the guys who were involved with the scene and TRC Records. The only releases they made were limited tape runs and those were so few that by the time they were popped into my stereo the tapes sounded warped.

MRR: How was your experience while migrating?
I immigrated to Vallejo, California, USA in 1993. My mother was the first to come here in 1984 in fear of the worsening conditions of Martial Law and for better opportunities. My mom started to petition for me in 1988 but I couldn't come here until 1993 because of the long wait lists the US has for families seeking to immigrate and because she had to save money before I could come and live with her.

MRR: How was your experience as a recently arrived immigrant? What did you have to go through? Did you have to face bitter experiences, discrimination? (In the punk scene as well as in society in general?)
When I came here I was fourteen going on fifteen and most my friends were not punks but Filipino gangbangers who also spoke my native tongue of Tagalog. I tried hanging out with the "rockers" that hung out at the railroad tracks near Vallejo High but I always got a negative vibe from them. One day a red-haired white kid named Scott threatened to stab me for hanging out with one of his friends who was a punk. One of my friends flashed him his gun tucked into his pants and Scott backed down. The punk kid and I remained distant friends but I stopped trying to hang out with the rockers at the railroad tracks and so did he.
I was in a gang before I got into going to shows. In the mid-'90s around Vallejo—everyone was gangbanging. Some of them were black, white, Asian, and Latino gangs. I got picked on a lot when I first came here because I didn't know the right clothes to wear or the right haircut to have. I wore Iron Maiden and Ramones shirts with long hair, bracelets, and tight jeans. Everyone else wore baggy clothes, Dickies, Ben Davis, and sportswear. My countrymen instructed me in the proper fashion and since I was a kid, I dressed the part but still listened to old punk and metal bands.
I got myself beat and shot at in continuation school because I wore the wrong color on the wrong side of the school bus, so after a while, after all my friends who were new too started getting jumped in, I joined. In their defense, my friends who were gangbangers were like my family—they fed me, clothed me, housed me when I needed it, and were a familiar feature in what seemed to be a hostile landscape.
I didn't stop hanging out with them until this got serious and I was arrested for something I regret so much. After I served my sentence in county and after a year and a half of work release, I started going to shows with friends of mine who were also tired of "gangsta" lifestyle and shit that came with it. We went to see bands like The Rudiments, Skankin Pickle, Workin Stiffs, Randumbs, The Criminals, and later on discovered bands like What Happens Next?, DS-13, and Los Crudos.
My friends who went through those experiences with me eventually formed my first band, Eskapo.

MRR: What good experiences did you have, what did you like about the country you migrated to?

My first observation was the size of food; its quantities and portions were gigantic compared to the measly bits of meat and other foodstuff in the Philippines. Places and housing that most people consider "ghetto" are palaces compared to shanty-towns and makeshift neighborhoods in Quezon City and Manila.

I also like that the electricity and water were on *all the time!* Back home before I left, neighborhoods would experience blackouts for six to eight hours every day at various times. The water would also get shut down during shortages and you had to store it or collect rainwater and purify it by boiling. Violence was also not as rampant and traffic isn't as congested. No one was ever shot in public and left for a couple of hours rotting in the open air. America has 911; in the Philippines (at the time) there was nothing of the sort and if you had no money to pay for services such as the fire department or an ambulance or a hospital—you better hope you're cool with your neighbors!

MRR: How did you like the scene of the country you migrated to compared with the scene in your country of origin?

I wasn't really part of a scene back home, although now the Filipino punk scene has grown and I would like to see many of the bands there. I still like all the bands that I liked back home but the Bay Area is rich in culture and intellect thus its punk scene is mostly the same.

My own band finds affinity with other punk bands with immigrants especially because there is that shared sense of being from another place and another culture. We get along and are friends with other bands as well but sometimes our customs and practices aren't always taken well by others or are misunderstood.

MRR: How were you affected by the decision to stay or to go back to your country of origin? How do you feel about that decision now?

If I stayed in the Philippines, I would not have much of a future. My family is able to stay afloat but most of my relatives have left or make just enough to live. I knew I had to leave because jobs were scarce and my family had no business or land to pass on to me.

It does sting to know my country is unfit to live for myself and my family, that we have the richest resources in Southeast Asia but foreign and American corporations own them or own the means by which to extract them. Subic Bay and Clarke Air Force Base are the two largest military bases outside of the US and they continue to bring conflict to my homeland. US Marines train Filipino soldiers to combat "terrorist" forces in the Philippines War on Terror as the countryside and rural areas become more and more militarized and its people disturbed from their way of life and often times caught in the crossfire.

The US and Pinoy soldiers both accuse and murder innocent organizers, activists, and journalists who are suspected communists or leftists. It saddens me to know that the situation has worsened since I left and that the current Philippine president Gloria Macapagal Arroyo wants to pass the Anti-Terror Law, which is similar to the Patriot Act but closer to the opening stages of another dictatorship.

I know now that it's best that I'm here to raise awareness not only about the Philippine punk scene and its influence on my own music but to use that medium to expose the situation of my oppressed countrywomen/men and to hope that one day my family will be able to live there.

To contact Rupert and Eskapo: myspace.com/eskapo

photo: Martin Sorrondeguy

NO HUMAN IS ILLEGAL!

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS ABOUT IMMIGRATION

Q. How come so many immigrants don't "follow the rules?"
A: Because the rules are designed to keep them out. If they had a choice, virtually everyone who came to the US would do it legally. But it's nearly impossible to get an immigrant visa, unless you are the spouse, child or parent of a US citizen—and even then it's often difficult. (Other relatives of US citizens, like siblings, must wait 15-20 years for a visa.) Even visitor visas are very hard to get. People from Western Europe, Canada, Australia and a few other places don't need a visa to visit here, but everyone else does (even though US citizens don't usually need visas to travel overseas). To get a visitor visa, you usually must own property, have a steady well-paid job, have a lot of money in the bank, and prove that you don't intend to immigrate.

Q: How "illegal" are undocumented immigrants?
A: People can't be illegal, only actions can be illegal. (If you broke the speed limit once, or got drunk when you were under age, does that make you "illegal"?) The act of entering the US without permission ("illegally") is a minor misdemeanor, like "disorderly conduct." Being present in the US without permission is not even a crime—it's just a civil infraction, like a parking violation.

Q: Does it really matter who's "illegal" and who's "legal"?
A: Some people try to make a big distinction between "legal" and "illegal" immigrants. But being out of status, or "undocumented," isn't a permanent condition. Some legal residents have had their status taken away, and some people who arrive without permission have managed to become legal residents and eventually US citizens (although it is now very difficult for many undocumented immigrants to "become legal"). Within many immigrant families some people are "legal" and some aren't. So isn't it an artificial distinction? Especially since virtually everyone who is undocumented wishes they could have the opportunity to "become legal."

Q: Do out-of-status immigrants pay taxes?
A: Immigrants pay sales taxes and real estate taxes as much as anyone else. (If you rent your home, real estate taxes are included in your rent.) Many out-of-status immigrants work on the books and also pay federal and state payroll taxes. If they use incorrect social security numbers to get their jobs, taxes are deducted from their checks but they are usually afraid to file for refunds, so they actually pay more than they should. Immigrants who work on the books also pay into Social Security, although most will never be able to claim benefits.

Q: Do out-of-status immigrants strain public services?
A: Immigrants who are out of status can't access welfare, and even when they have US-born children who are eligible, many undocumented parents are afraid to seek benefits for their kids. Public education is a right and is mandatory for all children, documented or not. Public schools are mostly funded by property taxes and things like state lotteries, and immigrants contribute to those funds at least as much as anyone else. As for health care, the big problem is that the US has no comprehensive health care program. A majority of the people without health insurance in this country are US citizens.

Q: Do out-of-status immigrants take jobs and bring down wages?
A: Most studies suggest that immigrants create as many jobs as they "take," since they are not only workers but are also consumers of goods and services. Out-of-status immigrants who accept lower pay than US workers probably do bring down the wage scale in certain job sectors, but that problem could be resolved by increasing labor protections and allowing all immigrants to work legally, so they could demand fair wages and more easily organize for their rights.

Q: Do immigrants commit more crime?
A: Virtually every study ever done shows that immigrants tend to commit *less* crime than non-immigrants. The media seems to play up crimes committed by out-of-status immigrants, but far more crimes are committed by US citizens. In fact, out-of-status immigrants are often the victims of crime, because they fear reporting anything to the police.

Q: Is "open borders" a crazy idea?
A: No. The other option–stricter laws and stricter enforcement—only makes things worse. Border crackdowns just make immigration more expensive and people-trafficking more profitable, the same way the "war on drugs" makes drugs more expensive and the drug trade more profitable. Workplace raids make it harder for immigrant workers to organize and defend their rights. Open borders seems like a better idea: no one would have to die to come here, immigrants wouldn't have to live in hiding or in fear, and we could start to work toward real integration.

Q: Would "open borders" solve the problem?
A: No, because it doesn't address the root causes of migration: global economic injustice, the corporate hijacking of natural resources, and wars and political violence. Most people who migrate don't do it for adventure but because they can barely survive, and see no opportunities for themselves or their children, in their home communities. Multinational corporations take away their natural resources and give nothing back, "free trade" treaties destroy small-scale farming and industry, and policies imposed by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund bring down wages, cut back services and increase unemployment. When people resist, they are confronted with violence and repression

Q: What can we do?
A: Learn about the real issues of immigration, and talk to all kinds of people about these issues. When someone says something anti-immigrant, try to get them to see another point of view. Get to know immigrants, make friends, learn another language and help others learn English. Get involved in local activist campaigns in your town: against the raids, for day laborers' rights, or against anti-immigrant laws. Take part in immigrant rights marches and rallies. Support international labor rights campaigns and anti-sweatshop efforts, take action against the World Bank and the IMF, and support global economic justice. Get involved.

[Prepared by Jane G. A flyer version of this Q&A will is available in English & Spanish at http://thepoliticsofimmigration.org along with lists of books, films, organizations, and other resources]

PLANES, BOATS, BUSES & FEET:

ONE PUNK'S JOURNEY FROM

LIMA TO NEW YORK

Sandro was interviewed by Esneider on August 2, 2007, in Manhattan. This is part one of his story; the rest will be published in the next issue of MRR. Translated from the Spanish by Jane G.

Part 1: Lima to Oaxaca

What's your name?
My name is Sandro.

How long have you been living here? Did you come straight to New York?
No, like everyone else, I first got to Arizona, I was in Los Angeles for a while, waiting... It's about to be three years since I got to New York.

Where are you from?
I'm from Peru, from Lima.

Let's start with the historic beginning—you were part of the punk scene in Peru?
Yes, from the scene in the mid-'80s. You could say that I'm from the second wave, because the first wave was the first four groups that everyone knows, and I started with the people in the second wave...

What groups were those in the first wave?
Leusemia, Autopsia, Guerrilla, Narcosis, Escuela Cerrada.

And the second?
Groups like SDM, Eutanasia, Excomulgados, Psicosis, Flemas, los Indeseables, all those groups...

G3?
No, G3 was already part of the '80s, end of the '80s... '86, '87 more or less.

When did you start in the punk scene?
I started back in '86. I went to shows at first because I was a neighbor of Daniel and Kimba, guitar player and drummer of Leusemia. Because of that I started to get interested in the music, and I realized that in certain places where they went to play, I was going to find people who had more or less the same tastes and almost the same characteristics as me. And we were rejected by the rest of the people who were stuck on consuming and all that. So we already had a space where we could relax, talk about the same things, listen to the same music, dress the same way, all that.

In those days, what was the political and economic situation in Peru?
Well, to start, in 1980 the democratic government began in Peru, because for the previous decade (1968-1980) Peru was ruled by a military government. So then the democratic era came to Peru, and everything more or less began to open up. The TV stations returned to their owners, all the media outlets returned to their owners, some factories returned to their owners, and from out of that, terrorism emerged. So already in that period you started to hear the first news about subversive attacks in the interior of the country—in Ayacucho especially—which was the city where the first page of terrorism in Peru was written. Then when they arrived in the city (Lima) things got more violent. The first government in the '80s was that of Belaunde, and then Alan Garcia took over from Belaunde (in 1985); that's when things start to get more difficult.

And now ironically Alan Garcia is the president again.
Again, yes. And they have the same problems. It's a legal game. He was out of the country for ten years, and then he comes back and there he is.

People have historic amnesia.
It's still present in my mind the time when, between '85 and '90, my family, my grandparents, my siblings and I had to go out into the street and stand in line for sugar, for rice, for bread. In that period, I was doing my military service, and from the barracks, I had to take things to bring home. But it wasn't just me. I took small things. The officers took things out in sacks and boxes. Man, those fuckers, they took everything—from a half a cow, to beds.

So you started to go to shows in that period?
Yes, in the mid '80s, to the first shows at El Hueco, at the universities, like San Marcos and the Technical University of El Callao—I will never forget that show—and Boca en Rio, lots more...

How was the atmosphere at that time?
A lot of camaraderie, because most of the people who went to the shows were already in bands. And when we went to shows in the early days, there weren't that many of us, if there were 50 of us that was a lot, and we were all friends. And in the end everyone talked to each other, everyone came down, it wasn't like now where it's divided into sectors, where you're metal, or anarcho punk, or hardcore, or you're with the band, or with the rich punks...

And everyone participated...
Everyone participated, and there was support from the people in the universities, in one case, there were people from the architecture school who took charge of making the stages, the infrastructure, all that. And little by little, more people doing poetry joined in, and people who were making fanzines, art, paintings, a lot of fanzines in that period...the most read and copied—even now I think they are making tons of photocopies—is the fanzine *Alternativa*, by the people from Guerrilla Urbana.

So with all that, when did you decide to come to the United States?
It occurred to me to come here because I was fed up with the same way of life in Peru, that every day you had to work to survive, but despite the fact that you were working, you couldn't afford any-

thing. What really, really collapsed everything was the fact that the factory where I worked closed its doors in South America, and I was left in the street without a job, and because at my age, to start over, from zero, all that...I decided to pick up my things and leave, and come here.

When you decided, did you talk to your family about it?
No, because...well, to start with, since I was ten years old my mom and dad were separated, and each went their separate ways and had their separate lives, my siblings and I were also separated and went to live with different relatives. We were later reunited but it wasn't the same anymore, because my siblings had gotten married—they each have their family—so it wasn't the same. So since I already felt alone in Lima, I didn't have anything, I decided it was time to look for something for me, and I decided to leave Peru.

How did you leave Peru?
To start, I talked to a person, and that person got me a ticket to Mexico, with a stopover in Panama. In Mexico I was going to go to the border and cross. In less than a month I was going to be here. But when I got to Panama, and flew to Mexico, in the airport in Mexico they didn't let me in. They sent me back to Panama. When I got to Panama, I had two options: go forward, or turn back. I thought: return to Peru, no fucking way, I'm already here, I'm going ahead with it. So I hired some other people to take me, since via air I couldn't do it, if I arrived at the airport in Mexico, it was going to be difficult, because they had already grabbed me there and sent me back.

So I was in Panama for a week, waiting for news from the person who had taken me to Mexico, but I didn't get any news. I joined up with some Hondurans, who told me, "We're going to get you to the US." I met them in the hotel, I didn't realize it but in that hotel where I was staying, there were a shitload of *mojados*...

You mean, people who were coming here to the US.
People who were coming here, but who stayed in that hotel waiting to leave a few at a time. When they told me about it, they said, "We're going to have a meeting in such-and-such a room," and I went to that room, and damn! You couldn't get inside, even one at a time. So many people!

Like how many people?
Shit, there were about 30 Ecuadorians, about 15 Peruvians, 16 counting me. And along the way we went meeting up with more people. So this guy says to me, this is how it works, we'll leave tomorrow, in groups. The price was the same for everyone. There was nothing like you're going to pay more, you're going to pay less. From Panama to Mexico they charged me $1,000 for the trip, but with all the expenses that had to be paid, buses, plane, everything.

So, I was in Panama City, the only thing the coyote asked was that we get ourselves on our own to a border city with Costa Rica called David. So they told us, you have to be in David on such-and-such a day, and when you get there you call me at this number, and from there we go to Costa Rica, from Costa Rica to Nicaragua, from Nicaragua to El Salvador, to Honduras, and from there to Guatemala.

I didn't want to wait any longer, because one, there was a shitload of people there, and two, it was too fucking hot. So the next day I got up at six in the morning, I got a taxi and went to the bus station, I bought my ticket and zoom! In six hours I was in David. On that part of the trip to David, we passed something like three checkpoints. And at the checkpoints, I had to pretend to be asleep so they wouldn't take me off the bus, since I had noticed that the people who were asleep didn't get taken off the bus. So I pretended to be asleep, and they didn't take me off the bus. But for the trip I had to get rid of all my stuff, I got rid of everything, my credit card, my wallet, everything. I kept only my passport and my return plane ticket, because if something happened, I would have to return to Peru.

I got to David. I thought it was a town, but it was just like a spot on the highway, with a few houses and stuff there, and there was a hotel there. I called this guy, and he told me to take a taxi and go to such-and-such a hotel, and when I arrived at the hotel, to ask for him. So I got to the hotel, to the reception desk, and said I came here for so-and-so, and they told me go to some room. I got to the room and since I got there before everyone else, I was the only one in the room—it was a room with two beds, and I was happy. But the next day ten people arrived, the day after that another ten, and shit, finally the room filled up just the same.

What kind of people were there, were they your same age?
No, there were older guys, couples, 45 years old, 50 years old. And there were people who told me...I don't know, it seemed like they really cheated the Ecuadorians, or they really took advantage of them, because there were people who had mortgaged their homes to come here. What happens is that they won't bring you here unless you pay everything up front. That's the problem. And they have two options, either they come over land or by sea. If they come by sea, in Guatemala the *migra* is waiting for them, and they have to return home, or their boats sink in the sea and they are totally fucked.

So after three days, when all the people got there, they had a meeting, and we formed into groups, and they said you guys will leave at such-and-such a time, every hour a group will leave. We're going to take you in the car, and we're going to leave you on the highway, and when your guide comes, because each group has a guide, he's going to be sitting in the minibus, in front, in the first seat, that's where your guide will be. When you see your guide, you get in that minibus, and you go to the back. That's how it happened, my guide came, I saw him, I got in the minibus, and we sat at the back. And that minibus takes you across the border between Panama and Costa Rica. But before you cross the line, the Costa Rican immigration agent gets on the minibus to ask for your documents. But everything is all arranged. When the cop sees the guide at the door, he doesn't board the minibus. And if he boards it, he doesn't say anything to the people at the back, he only asks the people in the front for documents, and then he leaves. So that's how it went, we got there, crossed the line, and got out of the minibus.

We were told we had to get off at the next curve, and there at that curve, there was a creek and an area thick with plants, and that's where we had to go, down to the creek, to wait for the car that would pick us up. A man would come with a car, and they give you a password, and you're going to have to run out and you're going to ask him, "who are you," and he's going to respond, and when he says such-and-such a thing, you all are

going to come out running and you're going to get in the car. And the guy has to take you. So that's how it happened, the guy arrived, we asked him, all that, we got in the car, it was a smaller van, and he took us to a house. Shit, in that house there were like 100 people.

More than before?
Way more than before. And that little town is called Paso Canoas, on the border between Panama and Costa Rica. But this was the Pacific side, and we had to get to the Atlantic side. The woman of the house called the guide and told him, take some of these people out because there are too many. So they say, "tonight we will take people out." So the car comes back, and they tell us to get in, and we have to go to another place, I don't remember what it was called, but it was Punta something, on the Atlantic side.

So the thing is, that this man who was making all my contacts in Costa Rica, they already knew about him and were after him; the house was already surrounded.

And this person was Costa Rican?
He was Costa Rican. They say he's the one who handles all the migration traffic there in Costa Rica. And from there, from that house in Paso Canoas, which was made of wood and mud, they took us to a bigger house, made of brick and cement. In that house a woman lived with her daughters. And her husband was a cop. On certain nights he came to the house to sleep. And that house was also full of people. The bedroom was five meters by five meters, with a bed for two people and a mattress on the floor, and 20 of us slept there. When we got to that house, there were already people there who were going to leave. So we had to wait for the others to get out before we could go inside. So it was like a shift change. We got out of the van, and they got in, to go off to Nicaragua. So they left, and that night we heard the news that the fuckers had gotten lost. Because when the police are chasing you, all the driver does is open the doors and say, "get out, run." And those guys had done that, they went off running and they got lost. But the next day when we were watching the news, we found out they had gotten caught, the cops had caught them on the highway and they had gotten deported.

In the house of this lady in Costa Rica, we spent something like two weeks, shit, every day drinking lemonade, eating bread and butter, and black beans with slices of bologna. Every day, shit. Every day. And one glass of lemonade, nothing more. All day. And there was no room to.... and it was fucking hot. So there came a moment in which we started to ask the guide to please get us out of there, because we had already spent a lot of time there, and every day we had to pay five dollars for the food, all that.

So the moment came when the guide said to us, tonight you're going, get ready, and we're going to go up north, to Nicaragua. But we had to pass from this side, the Pacific, to the Atlantic. And our group left in three cars. And the first car, that I was in, the cops started to chase us, and between the three cars they started communicating by radio, the driver was asking, "What do I do, what do I do?" and they said "dump them, dump them, dump them!"

So he goes and dumps us in this place, and says, "Run, run over there." We'll go look for you, run over there. He leaves us in this place, it's a kind of jungle, and we run straight ahead until we get to a hill, and from the hill we see the road, with the cop cars passing by, over and over. Then this torrential rain starts coming down, shit, we were soaked to the bone. It had already gotten dark out, and there we were, in the crappy weather, and the next day we sent two people out to see what was going on. And just when those two were walking to the road, we saw that the people were arriving, and these were the guys working for the boss who was taking us, they had come to find us. So they asked, "How many are you?"

They took us all to a house that was in an abandoned place, and they left us there like three days. Of those three days they only gave us food one day. Then the boss came and told us he was trying to figure out how to get us out, because there had been problems, and the cops were fucking with them and all that, and the cops had taken away their cars, so they didn't have cars anymore to take us in, but they had gotten a hold of taxis. The taxis are going to come, they're going to take you to a place, and from there you're going to go walking, walking, walking, walking to get to the Atlantic coast. OK, no problem. The taxis came, they took us, the taxis get stopped again and we get dumped again. So we had to go back to the house where we had been hiding out. Shit, we had no other solution.

Then they got hold of a small plane to take us from the Pacific coast to the Atlantic coast.

How many fit into the plane?
Shit, we were like eight people. So they had to do a shitload of flights. But I was on the first flight. We got to this place on the beach, and from there we went walking into the woods. We stayed in those woods, and slept there, for like three days, out in the open, with bad weather, and at night we heard the animals passing through the trees, there were also bulls that were loose, and horses that came to bother us at night. Shit! You heard sounds that you have never heard in your whole life. And one night we were sleeping, and this guy appears, and says to us, are you the people of "so-and-so," and he takes us deeper into the forest, we walk farther in, until we get to a main road, and on that road there's an intermittent noise, and he says, that's the car, when it comes get into it.

At night?
All at night, all at night. We got in the car, and the car took us to a beach, and we slept that night on the beach. From there they took us to a dock, and at the dock there was a yacht. An old yacht. We slept there for another night.

On the yacht?
On the old yacht. They brought us sodas and food. And then they brought a motorboat and they tell us, get in, so we get in the boat and they take us out to sea, and they took us like halfway across Costa Rica. And from there we got out on another beach, and from there we walked to the woods, and we stayed in a little cabin there with a man who was taking care of us. And it seemed like that cabin was a sort of central gathering point, because they had everything set up, they sold food, cigarettes, sodas, beer, liquor... and it was in a spot where nobody passed by, only the illegals. And when we got there, they told us, from here on the police won't fuck with us, the problems were all down there in the south.

So we got cleaned up, we changed our clothes and the next day they took us to the highway and we took a bus. The bus took us to the border with Nicaragua. On the border with Nicaragua, we stayed one night waiting

for them to come pick us up. And the next night they came with six taxis, and one of the guys told us that as long as the cop is there with his cap in his hand, we could cross the border. And when we crossed, we saw the cop standing on the bridge, waving the cars through with his cap in his hand, like, "Go ahead and cross, go ahead and cross."

We were six cars, and five got across but the sixth didn't make it. But in the end we met up with those people farther along. What happened is that the cop wanted more money...

I crossed that border too, once when I was traveling to Nicaragua. You get to the border in the daytime and they stop you there. I had a US passport, so they made me stand over to one side, and the ones they stopped were the Nicaraguans returning to Nicaragua. They stopped them all. They were the ones who got fucked with the most.

Really? Well, that was the longest part of the trip, in Costa Rica. Because then when we got to Nicaragua, shit, it was just a matter of hours to get from the south to the north of Nicaragua. Just hours. The car seemed to be flying; I could only tell that we were passing through villages, just village after village after village. Every so often the drivers communicated by radio, they said there were cops on such-and-such a street, we would stay in a village driving around in circles, and when they said now you can go ahead, we would go ahead. But it was like that, shit, we were going like 100 kilometers an hour, with the car packed, because in front there were like six of us, and there were two in the hatchback.

So we got to Honduras. We were on the border of Nicaragua with Honduras, and to get to El Salvador, the guide makes us walk, from Nicaragua to El Salvador, through part of Honduras. On this walk we hooked up with another *mojado* who was from Colombia, a huge guy, like 1.80 or 1.90 meters (6 feet) tall, and he was in training to cross people...

Like an apprentice...

Yeah, like an apprentice. And we walked through the jungle. On the border of Nicaragua and Honduras, you could still see, right there on the border, the jeeps, tanks, combat vehicles, just dumped there, from the time of the Central American war.

On that stretch of the trip, we were exhausted, because of all the climbing up and down, and people were just ready to give up, and they say to this Colombian guy, you know what, I think you're pulling our leg, we're going in circles here, because we've passed by this spot before. And the guy says, "no, no, no." Well, you know what? Now we're going to walk on this path. We were walking along the left-hand path, now we're going to walk on the right-hand path. And that's when we started moving forward. This guide was taking us in circles. Why? Because in this place it's really popular, and everyone who has crossed through Central America knows, that in Central America they rob you on this walk. So it seems like that's what he wanted to do. But maybe he held back a little because he didn't know that in that group, some of us were Peruvians, he thought we were all Ecuadorians. And the Ecuadorians, when they come by foot, they come without any cash, because they paid for everything before they leave. So he says, what am I going to steal from them if they've got nothing?

So he starts to take people around in circles, waiting for his people to show up, and when it's about to get dark, he stops and says, "I'm going to see what's happening up ahead." And he goes and he comes back and says, up ahead there are some people who want to rob us, let's put all our stuff together in a bag for them and they won't do anything to us. So the people start complaining, but we don't have anything! No, but take off whatever you have, shoes, anything, whatever you have in your pockets. No, no, we've got nothing. And in the end, nothing happened.

We got through that section of the border (from Nicaragua to El Salvador, about 150 km) in about three days, just walking, walking, walking. Once we got to El Salvador, things were really easy, because we got to a main road, and took a bus. Since El Salvador is so small, I think the urban transport there, it's buses, but there they go between cities. So in an hour by bus we're in San Salvador, they took us to the main bus station of San Salvador, and from there they took us to the beach. No, first they took us to a wooded area. In the woods there was a river—a really full, fast-moving river, I remember. We took a motorboat on that river, we all got in the boat, and we went all the way down the river. All night, and that river empties out into the sea. And when we got to the sea, another motorboat was waiting for us. We got on the boat, and continued the trip on that boat, but this time by sea. So when it was starting to get light out, we realized that on the horizon you could see a city. And we realized we were arriving already at the border between El Salvador and Guatemala.

We had to go to Guatemala City. So when we get to the beach, we get to a house, a village, and I remember this village was funny, because it seemed like a supermarket... everyone, when you get to a place, you get rid of your clothes and you put clean clothes on, right? But these people seem to have collected all those clothes and washed them, and they had them there for sale. Because when you come, you're all wet, and that shit, right? And these guys, for a T-shirt they charged $10, for a pair of socks $5, and that was their business. Coffee for a dollar, food for three dollars. A phone call, because those people had satellite telephones, cost you a shitload. There were people who called, to tell their families they were OK. I called my family when we were in Guatemala.

So we got to this beach, on the Pacific, and from there we took a bus that took us to the eastern part of El Salvador. And there, just like before, they took us to the mountains, we walked the whole way, we walked and walked, but that walk was brutal, because it was raining, and there was a shitload of mud, we were covered in mud up to our chests, in mud and clay, and the mosquitos were biting us, everything was terrible. We crossed that part, it's a triangle that joins El Salvador, a little sliver of Honduras, and you end up in Guatemala. And when you get to Guatemala, you get to a sort of open field, and there's a road but it's a dirt road, nothing more. And there they made us wait for a bus that goes to Guatemala City. And that's when the guide tells you, you know what, get rid of everything, dump your stuff because here you can't bring your stuff on the bus. So you dump all your stuff, and you get on the bus, and the bus takes you to Guatemala City. When you get to Guatemala City, everyone who's on the bus starts to get off, right? So we're the only ones left, the last ones, there's no one else. And the driver asks us, where are you going? We don't know what to tell him. Then the same driver asks: are you guys the people of so-and-so? Yes. Get off here and walk over there, he says.

Everyone already knows the deal.

Yeah. So we get to this hotel, and we go straight on in, just the way we are, totally filthy. And there's a man there and he says, "Come in here, come in here."

He made us go into a room where there were more people, and he says: everyone take a shower, and look for pants, a T-shirt, you'll find some over there. He had a bunch of clothes there. Now hurry up and change because you're leaving any minute now. OK, so we showered, everything, we changed our clothes. And when we're changing the guy comes and says you have to leave right now, walk out in groups of four. So we start to leave in groups of four, and a pickup truck with polarized windows comes and they get the four of us into the back of it, and I have no fucking clue where they took us but eventually we realize we are entering the garage of a house. The driver gets out and tells us not to get up, he opens the garage door, puts the car inside, he goes out, closes the garage door, comes in through a different door and says, OK, now get out of the truck and go to the third floor. Shit, all the floors of that house had illegals staying on them. A shitload of illegals. When we got to the third floor, they asked us, whose people are you? Ah, you're so-and-so's people. OK, come here. They gave us food, something to drink...

Like each coyote has his section?

Every coyote has his section, and every coyote has his way of treating his people. Like, this guy doesn't pay, so you wait there all hungry, this one is good, he gives you food, gives you something to drink, he gives you somewhere to shower, to change, asks you what you need...

So we arrive, and the woman there was just washing clothes, and the clothes I had stunk to shit, so I asked her if she could wash my clothes, and she washed them, and dried them. We were there in that house for one night. And the next day they call us, they say, hey, so-and-so's people, come over here. There were four of us. With everything I've been telling you, the people start to leave in groups from the beginning but then the groups start to disperse, you're going to go first, the group that comes behind you goes after you, so with the people that I had left with, our group of four, they took us from that house to another hotel where there were two more Peruvians, and then we were six. With those six people, we were in that hotel for like a week.

What did you do there for a whole week?

Shit, you do nothing there, absolutely nothing! Because you don't have shit, you can't go out, nothing. There in the house, if the woman saw that your hair was... you know it's the custom of people in Central America to keep their hair short, so she herself would cut your hair, so you wouldn't stand out so much. Or they would say, go out into the sun and let the sun burn you a little. Because some of the people were really white, and in that country there aren't that many white people. Or they would say take a shower, shave. So we were in that house for like a week, and a guide comes and says, "OK, put all your documents here." He made all the Peruvians put our documents in an envelope, and with the people from other countries, he took their documents and burned them. They burned the documents of the Central Americans. They made us Peruvians put our documents in an envelope, and they sent those documents to Peru, and they said, talk to your families, tell them to go to such-and-such a place to pick up your documents.

And with that the man says, you know what? We need to change your money. Since we had come with dollars, right? We have to change a certain amount of dollars to Guatemalan currency. And shit, it was like $40 we had to change, and the guy comes with a huge bag, for each dollar there were like 10 or 20 bills of that shit.

And the guy says tonight we leave, and we're going to take a bus that's going to take us to the north, and if there's a problem we'll switch to another bus. And the trick is that for the cops not to fuck with you, it's preferable to take a first-class bus. So we got in the line for first class, and we got on the bus. And by the way, they even give everyone like a kind of bag lunch for the trip.

So when we had gone a ways, the guy wakes you up and says get out here, and we get out at a village, and to get from that village to the border, we had to go in a van. We get to another village, where to get to the other side we had to cross this immense river, and you cross this river in a barge that goes back and forth, kind of like the ferries here, but it's a barge, and from one side of the river to the other there was a cord, like a kind of cable that pulled it. Shit, there were like 200 of us illegals in that place, waiting for the barge so we could cross.

How many fit on the barge?

Shit, a ton of people, and they took merchandise too, there was room for a lot of people and they even took a car across on that barge. We filled it up with all the people who were there, and crossed to the other side. On the other side, we went a bit deeper into the forest, and the guide left, and he came back about a half hour later with a bigger speedboat, and on that same river we had just crossed, we took off on the boat and went deeper into the forest, but on the river, and shit, everywhere you looked, it was just nothing but vegetation.

It reminded me, it was as if we were on the Amazon river, you just see plants and trees, and curves, and curves, and curves... That river is what takes you to the border with Mexico. And there was a spot there that was guarded by the Guatemalan Special Forces. So the Special Forces stop the boat. And they talk to the guide, and the guide gives them like, $300. And they say OK, now you can go. And we went deeper, way, way deeper, to the border with Mexico. We didn't get to the actual border, we were a few kilometers short of it, and then that boat goes even deeper into the forest. Since the river had smaller tributaries feeding into it, we went up one of those tributaries, to a place where we couldn't go any farther, and the guide says OK, now get out here, and he takes us to a place, a village that is just meters from the border. The village is called Naranjo, and you can see the bridge there that crosses into Mexico, and on one side is the Mexican police, and on the other side is the Guatemalan police.

So in this village, every day starting around noon, they have a kind of market, and the people from Mexico sometimes cross over to buy Guatemalan things, and then they return to Mexico. And that was one of the options for getting into Mexico, that is, when the people were returning, in a big group, we get into the group and we enter Mexico that way.

Mixing in with everyone...

Mixing in with everyone. But the people said no, that it was really dangerous because you had to cross with your ID in your hand, and we were going to go across with just a normal card in our hands, and if they stopped us, it was going to be dangerous. So the guide tells us, we're going to go for a walk, cross

the border on foot.

But to walk, we had to go around that guard post, where there was kind of fort on the Mexican side, so we had to go deeper into the forest, walk single file, get over to Mexico and then go back to the road. And that's what we did. We walked. And that took the whole night, we walked a lot, all night, and the next day around six in the morning we got to a house. And when we got to that house, the guide asked us if we were thirsty, and he took out like two cases of bottled water and gave them to us. I grabbed two bottles; I drank one and stashed the other in my backpack, in case we're walking somewhere and there's nothing around.

Every town I got to, I saw clothes lying around, so I would always stash a T-shirt, a pair of shorts, just in case. I would get to a place, take off my dirty clothes, put on the clothes I found there, and on top of that I would grab some more clothes and stash them. In case any of my companions needed them, I would say, look, I've got a t-shirt here, put it on. Because some people would travel with clothes that drew too much attention, like yellow, or fluorescent green, and you can't travel with that. You can travel with dark clothes, stuff that doesn't have a lot of bright colors. So that's what I did.

So when we finally crossed into Mexico, I don't remember what that town was called, the guide tells us that from there we have to get to Oaxaca. So we get to a house that was on the main road. It was like a farmhouse, right? There was a room where the illegals were, but there were illegals outside too. That house was a store because they sold beer there... or from the facade it seemed to be a store, but behind the facade there were illegals hidden there. There were Ecuadorians and Central Americans who had bought beer and started to make noise, so it seems that the people who passed by there called the police. I was inside the room, and I see everyone start to run toward the hill. So I turn around and sneak a glance over my shoulder, and I see a guy dressed in green, walking over. At that point the woman comes over and closes the curtain of the room, and she says, don't worry, they can't come in here, they're only going to inspect us. And those people who stayed outside drinking, let them get busted. That was around noon, and the cops didn't leave until nighttime.

So the woman comes and says OK boys, get ready, tomorrow early in the morning you'll start to leave. And then with other people we all begin to form groups of eight, and they take us out of there. The road was right outside the door of the woman's house, and on the other side was a kind of short steep slope going down. The woman says, "Wait for me down below, and when the bus comes, I'm going to call you, and you're going to climb up and get on the bus, and the bus is going to take you to Oaxaca." And the bus came, and the woman flagged down the bus, and the bus didn't stop, it kept going straight ahead. And the woman says, "How strange."

Then when the second bus came, the woman says stop, and the bus keeps going ahead, but then farther down the road it stops, and they go to the driver, and the driver says no, don't take people this way right now because up ahead there's a checkpoint and they've arrested a bunch of people. Everyone who had gone before us had gotten arrested up ahead. So the woman says we have to go back to the house now, and you have to wait there. We waited like two days. Then, when the second day came, she took us out in front of her house, but she took us up into the woods and brought us out at another part of the road, then she put one of us in one spot, another in another spot, like that. And I remember that the signal was that you had to have a bottle of soda in your hand. And she gave a bottle of soda to each of us. And she said, this is going to be your pass, don't drink it until you get there. Because when the cops see you with that, they won't do anything to you.

It was all worked out?

They had it all worked out. Said and done. The bus came, we got on the bus, we got to the checkpoint, and when the cop got on the bus, he didn't say anything. At the second checkpoint, the soldiers get on, they don't say anything. Everything like normal. So we got to Oaxaca with no problems. When the bus gets to Oaxaca you hear people start to shout the password, for example, let's say the password is "clown," then people are shouting, "hey, clown," and you have to find that guy. And they take you wherever they have to take you.

And they took us walking to a house where there was a woman who had like eight kids, all of them young, shit, I think the oldest was nine and the littlest was one. And that house, shit, it didn't even have a fan, and it was hot as shit, and on top of everything those kids are crying... fucking shit. So we talked to a guide and told him to move us out of there. And he moved us to another house, but to get to that house, you had to pass over a bridge, a little bridge, and at the end of that bridge was a police checkpoint. We had to go through early in the morning because that's when the guards are just getting up. So we go walking, and the guide says, "OK, go across the bridge in groups of two, and just follow me. I'm going to cross the bridge, I'm going to go to the right, I'm going to walk two blocks, and then I'm going to turn left and you're going to follow me, but don't lose your way, because I'm going to walk fast, and when I go into a house, that's the exact house you have to go into."

We followed him, crossed the bridge, and the guards were just getting up, one of them was brushing his teeth, the other was smoking. We crossed like nothing, all normal, and when we got to the house, there were more people there, about eight more people. And they said that a day earlier, the cops had come to check it out, and at the back of that house there was kind of a wooded area, and those woods had a little river, so when the cops came the previous day what these guys did is take out the window, which was made of wood, and go out through there, because they couldn't go out through the door. And they went into the woods and stayed there until the cop was gone. The people from that house tell us: don't stick your head outside, don't go out, nothing, whatever you want we'll bring it to you. And that's how it was. We would say, ma'am, we're thirsty. OK, what do you want? A soda? OK. And we would put our money together and the woman would go out to buy the soda. What do you want to eat? We want chicken soup. So she would go buy the chicken, and make chicken soup for us.

Then the guide starts to talk to us, he says you know what, don't start believing you've made it, we're just entering Mexico, you haven't made it anywhere, from here on it all depends on you, you have to collaborate, blah blah blah. From now on, we're going out in groups of two. We're not going by bus because right now the checkpoints are fucked, we're going in cargo trucks instead. And so we left one night in groups of two, with the guide, and he took us to a cargo truck terminal...

[to be continued in the next issue of MRR...]

EDUARDO OF ANFO: THREE YEARS IN THE ROTTEN STATES

Translated from Spanish by Jane G.

OK, I'll start out saying who I am, my name is Eduardo, and I came to the US in October of '04. I come from the chaotic city of Lima, on a piece of land called Peru. I've been inside and active in the punk scene in Peru and in various parts of South America for the past fifteen years. Most of my comrades, friends, experiences in bands, projects, etc., are in those fifteen years within that scene.

When I moved in October of '04 to the US, I ended up living in Buffalo because my partner was from there, so I got there and lived for a while in a punk house. In the beginning I was really enthusiastic about getting to know the comrades from a political punk scene here in the US, since I had read good fanzines and had listened to good bands from these parts, and received other information that made me think that here in the active political punk scene in the US people have a total understanding of things and a consciousness about the different worlds in which people live.

In general I want to say that, at least in my humble experience in these three years in the US, I have felt and ended up disappointed, seeing how things really happen here. Basic things like personal relationships and friendships—for example people here so easily change friendships overnight, after so many experiences together, etc. So after seeing the lack of consciousness, the selfishness in which people live here, and even in the political scene that supposedly has consciousness, I don't know what to think. It makes me sad and disappointed in this scene that I put so much effort into and believed in so much. The lack of attitude, lack of self-questioning in simple things... I don't know what to think about it, really.

For me it's basic and simple, where I come from, the reality I have lived in, maybe it has pushed me so hard to see things in another way. In Lima, I come from one of the oldest and at the same time most dangerous neighborhoods of the city, and the reality there is very hard. So I think maybe all those factors open your head and your eyes at the same time—I don't know, that's what I believe anyway. And at the same time you crash against your dreams, since you only find frustration and misery, it's hard to carry on with your ideas and your dreams in place and survive day to day over there. But by contrast, here when I went to New York City with the "Latino punks" (to put it like that), like with the people from Huasipungo, I felt like I was at home with my family. Or with the day laborer from All Systems Fail I also felt very comfortable, really the attitude, the level of consciousness, the friendliness, in general very cool experiences and good comrades, and you can feel more identified.

I'll tell you another experience I had in a punk house where I lived a while back, talking once with the people who lived there, they questioned me about why I didn't go to many of the shows that happened there, since I was always working... At that moment I didn't know whether to laugh or tell them to fuck off, in truth, since I couldn't understand how people who claim to have some level of consciousness and political ideas could ask me that, as if I loved working so much. It's really crazy how the people here don't question the most basic things like paid jobs that make our lives miserable, but I as an immigrant and like many of the immigrants who come to the US have very heavy responsibilities that tie us down to supporting our families, an experience that I don't believe a punk kid originally from here could even understand.

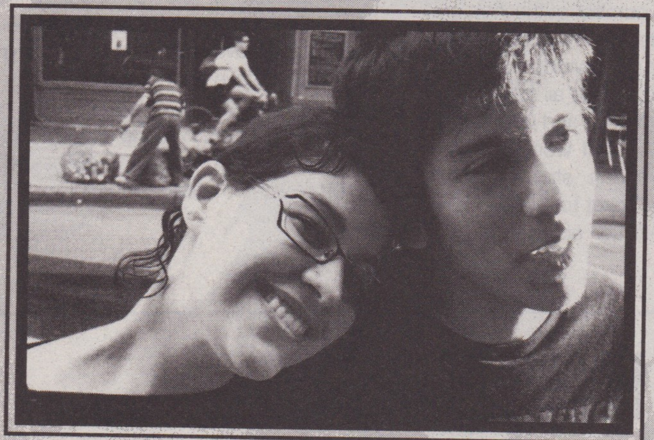
And that's not all: here in Portland, where I live now, I have met punks who have asked me if I'm illegal or legal. I can't believe it, really, what I heard one time left me without words, one night in a punk house I heard someone say "speak English or die." Truly the shit I have seen in my experience here with the so-called political punk activists and all those nicknames they use, it makes me think a lot about how things are here in the US.

The racism I have experienced here where I live now is really fucked, since I also have to deal with that day after day, at the same time I have noticed that the so-called political punk scene is also very sexist, since it gives a lot of power to women. I understand that the societies we live in are really *machista* but feminism is the same shit, it's power to one sex and that is sexism. If a girl wants to say any shit about a guy, whether it's the truth or a lie, it isn't questioned if it comes from a girl. That to me is super-sexist. Where I come from, what's right or wrong is not based on your sex. It's equal. At least with comrades or in alternative places with people who are breaking the parameters imposed by the society we live in.

Over all, my experiences here in the US have been a bit hard and disappointing. And they leave me thinking: what use are all those great fanzines that get out there and are really famous or great bands with beautiful records if the selfishness and lack of basic consciousness that we're living in here means that they are shit and a total lie?

My conclusion is that the political punk scene in the US, or in the so-called first world as they call it, makes me laugh.

MELISSA LORENZANA



My name is Melissa. In the punk/hardcore scene, they call me LOUD Melissa. I was born in New York City, and both of my parents are from Puerto Rico. My father's family has been in PR for a long time, but the family name is descended from Italy, near Pisa. My mother's family is from Corsica, Spain (Seville) and Portugal (Setubal). My father had a son with a woman in Guadalajara, Mexico.

I have been involved in the punk scene for a long while and have supported bands that speak all types of languages. I am a volunteer at ABC No Rio in New York City. My personal favorite immigrant-based punk is definitely the Spanish language hardcore that is coming out of Chicago, IL. It's really moving to know that the scene out there didn't die out with Los Crudos breaking up.

Becoming friends with the bands out there, in addition to the Spanish-language bands here (thanks to being the Huasipungo merch person!) has led to my opening up to bands from all over the world who sing in other languages. I play mix CDs for some of the white kids, to expose them to bands that they wouldn't otherwise hear, like Grito or Eskorbuto. This helps them understand the vibe of the kids who emigrate here.

I have a special place in my heart for the Puerto Rican punk, oi!, ska, and hardcore bands as well: Cojoba, Tropiezo, Juventud Crasa, Steel Toe, Golpe Justo, La Fundacion and many others. These are certainly bands that have personally influenced me.

I think the best way that there can be some sort of understanding in the scene, at least here in NYC, is to make an effort to try and speak to the kids at shows that you don't know. I love to chat up the kid who is wearing a Sin Dios shirt and finding out that she is from Guatemala. Try and speak a little Spanish (or another language), try to finagle your way through some Italian. Hell, I freaked out when I realized that I learned some French from years of listening to Brigada Flores Magon. Most kids who come here can speak a little English and are generally willing to try, just to practice. Obviously, if you're both at a show, you've already got something in common.

DANIELA

Written in July 2007 in Mexico City; Translated by Jane G.

If you ask me why I went to the US, the first answer is economic necessity; in my country of origin, Mexico, there are not opportunities to live a dignified life.

Not knowing how to face such a pressing economic need, my mom started with the idea that I should go to the US, because for her, she thought it would be best for me. My mom hired someone to take me, which disturbed me a lot, because I thought: it's true she wants me to go. I was so pissed off that I went and met with this guy, who I knew because he was my classmate in school, though I hadn't seen him in a while because he had gone to the US.

Here in Mexico, his family was doing badly in economic terms, but when he arrived back home from the US with some really nice van, we thought that really people must live a better life there. I told him my current situation and he offered to take me there. He was going to charge me $1,600; I told him: but I don't have the money to go.

He told me, "That's no problem, once you get there you can start working and pay me back over time."

But I said there's another problem: I have no family there. "That's not a problem," he replied, "you can stay with my wife."

But I'm scared, I said. "Don't worry, he said, "you'll cross the border with me."

But none of it was true. When they came to my house to get me, I saw that a lot of people began to get in the van; we were like ten people all crammed in there to Caborca (in Sonora state), we stayed the night in a hotel, again all crowded together, because the next day we would cross the desert, with twelve hours of walking. They told us to eat a good breakfast because after that we couldn't eat; we bought water and got into another van, and we were 25 people at that point. They told us not to wear or bring anything valuable because gangsters always robbed people on the road.

The instructions were not to speak during the trip, to walk in single file following the leader, and that's how we did it. We arrived at an Indian reservation. I don't know what that place is called but I know it's near Tucson. We hid in a trailer for two days, without being able to eat or rest much because we didn't all fit in one small room. The trafficker said he would start to send only those who had already paid, then those who would deposit the money in an account of the traffickers. In Mexico, they communicated by cell phone, so it seemed that relatives had to pay to free their family members who were trying to cross. And when the trafficker asked me if I had already paid, I replied: not until I get there, and he answered: I'm sorry but you will be the last one. The American Indian was the accomplice—he made profits from each person—and he took us to a house in Tucson where there was another group. These human traffickers were a married couple, an American guy and a Puerto Rican woman, and he had brought one group of people and she had brought another, plus our own group. While we stayed at the house they kept on demanding money, and when they got close to having enough they took about fifteen of us in a van to start to distribute us among different states. They said if immigration stopped us, we should say we were on our own and that there were no traffickers with us. Everything was suspense and fear.

They took me to Cullman, Alabama, and left me with the family of the trafficker. His wife told me I had to sleep on the floor and when she got back from work she would see about what I could eat.

An uncle of the trafficker gave me a pair of pants and a T-shirt, since the only things I had on me were the dirty clothes I was wearing—he realized how this woman was treating me and offered to let me stay at his house. At first they treated me well but later they hid even the food so I wouldn't be able to eat. They found work

for me but I soon figured out that what I earned just barely covered the rent, the bills, and the food, and wasn't enough to pay the debt. So I had to look for another job. I got the phone number of a girl I knew in Mexico, a friend of my boyfriend's, and talked to her and told her the situation. She helped me go to Chicago where she lives.

I literally had to escape from there because when I told the traffickers that I wanted to go to Chicago and pay back the debt from there, they refused. They kept watch over me and threatened to would stop me from leaving, even if it meant they had to beat me. I had to be crafty and escape, and I paid them $600, but only after they threatened to do something to my family if I didn't pay.

I got some information about human trafficking. I had some phone numbers and called, but they weren't much help and they gave me the phone number of the immigration agency, and I decided not to call there. After everything that happened, and finding myself alone, I realized that all the illusions of a better life weren't real, and with the difficulty of getting jobs and working just to halfway survive, I didn't stay for much longer and bought a ticket to take me back to Mexico. The trafficker also returned to Mexico and demanded his money, and my stepfather and I ended up paying him 11,000 Mexican pesos (about $1,100) so he would leave us alone.

It's difficult for me to recognize that still, in this century, there is still a trade in people and slavery, and the hardest thing for me is to have been a victim.

Currently, I am in my country with my family and friends, working and studying, perhaps without economic riches but certainly with emotional ones.

DESOBEDIENCIA RECORDS

Desobediencia Records is a DIY label based in Austin, Texas, responsible for putting out some of the most exciting HC punk bands from Latin America over the last years. The label is run by Manolo and Vere, who both emigrated from Monterrey, Mexico over a decade ago. Interview by Lucho in Austin, Texas in June 2007. Translated from Spanish by Lucho.

MRR: When exactly did you guys immigrate to the US?
Manolo: We have been here close to eleven years now.
MRR: Tell us about your experience. What's been the hardest obstacle to overcome?
Vere: Well, the obstacles have been many, but for me the hardest was being away from my family for so long. Not being able to see my family—my brothers and my sisters—for long periods of time became really hard.
Manolo: Also the language was a barrier and at first was very difficult, we didn't speak any English, and everywhere we went it was frustrating not being able to understand anybody, also being able to get a job was very difficult at first. But we're still here trying to make it.

MRR: Having lived in both countries and being involved in both scenes here in the US and in Mexico, what main differences do you see in the punk scenes?
Vere: Well, at first I was really shocked that nobody shared their equipment at the shows and everyone used their own instruments. That was really different for me, because in Mexico everyone uses the same instruments. Now we understand that it's because here you definitely have more access to buy your own equipment. Also, we saw that there were a lot of bands that came from different countries and toured, and for Latin American bands it's a lot harder to cross borders and get legal paperwork to come here. That could be because you don't have enough money for the visa or it's hard to have one—like for the tourist visa you have to pay $100 in advance, then they give you an appointment for the interview. So you go to the interview with all the papers that you think they are going to ask for and then sometimes they just and say, "Come back next year." And you are like, "What?!" It's like, "You didn't even ask me anything!!" And they just ignore you, but you already paid $100 and they don't give you the money back. We know a lot of bands from South, Central, and North America that would love to tour here but they can't because their visas have been denied.
MRR: Have you experienced racism in the scene here?
Vere: Everyone here so far has been very nice to us. We've never had any problems with racism here in the scene.
MRR: When did you start the label?
Vere: Me and Manolo started the label seven years ago with the purpose of releasing bands from Latin America that shared a lot of the same ideas we shared. We wanted to distribute and put out bands that didn't really have the resources to put out their own stuff or didn't have the distribution out here. There are a lot of bands in Latin America whose music unfortunately will not get widely distributed outside of Latin America because of lack of money, etc. We hope with the label that at least some of these bands will get their message across to different people from all over.
MRR: How does the label work?
Manolo: Me and Vere run the label together. We work as a team and distribute the work equally, from sending packages to deciding what bands to put out. If we get a demo from a band, we read their lyrics first—that's very important to us—if we like their music and what they're all about we release their music. Everything is done by us, the distributing, the packaging, the printing. It's all DIY.
MRR: Can you tell us what have you released so far?
Vere: We have released many things—CDs, 7"s, 10"s—and in all we have 16 releases that we have put out or co-released with the help of other labels around the world, featuring bands like Fallas del Sistema (Mexico), Apatia No (Venezuela), Migra Violenta (Argentina), Pirexia (Uruguay), Altercado (Chile), Rash (Monterrey), Grito de Odio (Spain), Karuma Bakudam (France), Reataque (Ecuador)/Lecsa-Punk (Hungary), we have also released bands from the US like Kontraattaque, Sin Orden, BSA, and Severed Head of State.
MRR: What has been the hardest task doing this label?
Manolo: Well, as you can imagine doing a DIY HC punk label here is not that easy. Sometimes distribution can be pretty hard because of the money, that's probably the number one problem.
MRR: How do you see the US Latino punk scene today?
Vere: We have made lots of friends that live in different cities here in the US, and we keep in contact with them. We do not like divisions between the white scene and the Latino scenes—we think it's stupid. We're against all types of divisions and believe that we should be working together. Where we live, here in Austin, the scene has been very friendly—we love them!!
MRR: Are you in contact with punks in Latin America?
Manolo: We have some contacts with punks in some cities of Latin America, and that's where some of our releases are distributed, we do trades with them and have many friends down there.
MRR: What's coming up for Desobediencia?? Any upcoming releases?

Vere: We have a couple projects coming up, the main ones are a No Slogan (Chicago) 7" and a IV Reich (Spain) 7". We're very excited about both of them.
MRR: Any last words?
Manolo: Cheers to all the people who have supported us over the years, and to all the bands that have let us release their stuff.
Vere: We must keep moving forward and helping each other mutually! Cheers to all the people out there in the struggle trying to fight for a more dignified and just life! You can get in contact with us via the internet or regular mail. Many thanx!

Desobediencia2000@yahoo.com.mx
http://myspace.com/desobediencia

ESTEBAN: BACK TO THE ROOTS

Interviewed by Esneider, August 2007. Translated by Jane G.

MRR: Where are you from?
I'm from France.
MRR: And now you live in Venezuela? Why did you move there?
Yes, I've been here for four years, I moved because I have most of my family here, and my father was Venezuelan and he educated us the Latin American way. When I brought his ashes here I fell in love with it in three days and decided to switch continents. Also in France I had suffered a lot of racism since the time I was in school, and here for the first time I felt at home and nobody was telling me otherwise. I was already 30 years old and I thought if I can manage to live to age 60, I would like to spend at least half my life in the country of my ancestors.
MRR: Were you part of the punk/anarchist scene in France?
Yes, this year my brother and I celebrate 20 years of counter-cultural activism, without a break and with no steps backwards.
MRR: Have you had any problem with documents?
No, I'm French-Venezuelan by birth, but the process was long because I didn't accept the corruption that exists in the DIEX offices [DIEX is the Venezuelan government's immigration and identification agency].
MRR: They gave you trouble?
They always make everything go really slow, so that people will pay to accelerate the process. Here I set up La Libertaria, an Autonomous Center for Counter-Culture and Anarchist Studies (http://acultura.org); it's the second public anarchist space in Venezuela.
MRR: In what city and state?
The people's anarchist library is open every day in Biscucuy, in Portuguesa state, it's a *campesino* town at the foot of the Andes. I'm also a founding member of the town's human rights committee. We report abuses by the police. The police tortured me two years ago and have threatened me with death ever since. We were about eight people in the beginning but now there are about three of us who are active, and the police have all three of us under death threats. We also organize human rights workshops.
MRR: You haven't had any problems because of your political work, because they use the idea that you are "foreign" to attack you?
They tortured me for being foreign, for my mannerisms and my political work. Here they are used to beating up young people, and since I had helped the youth to organize themselves and report the abuses, they fucked with me; also at that time I spent day and night selling *tostones* [crispy fried plantains] from a cargo bicycle.
MRR: How do you make a living now?
I make a living teaching French and English classes and selling crafts. I also sell incense at the library. My situation is really difficult right now because I can't go out on the street much; in September I'm moving from here to a place on a mountain, to set up a community village where we're going to work in agriculture.
MRR: Did you get used to life in Venezuela quickly? Do you miss France? What things do you miss?
I always get used to places quickly when I feel comfortable. What I miss most about France are the hardcore punk shows and the squat scene. The last few years I was in France I lived in a community in the mountains in the southeast, I worked with horses, goats, and agriculture, plus we had a library and did shows in a nearby town. The next space will be better, because we'll be in the mountains.
MRR: Your companion is Venezuelan?
Yes, she's Wayuu [a member of the Wayuu indigenous ethnic group].
MRR: And culturally you understand each other, or you have problems?
No, everything is fine, we have been together for a year already; she left this morning to videotape a 15th birthday party over near where we're going to move, and tomorrow I'll go meet her there and we'll go to Caracas to a meeting of the non-Chavista left. [Leftists who don't consider themselves followers of Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez.]
MRR: Does she speak the Wayuu language?
She understands it but doesn't speak much, she grew up in Maracaibo and her mother speaks it perfectly. I want to learn, so she's going to have to learn it better too. I also work with indigenous communities, and I set up a website about the struggle of the Wayuu against coal mining. I met my companion at a meeting against coal mining. Indigenous people are very interested in anarchism. There are a lot of really good autonomously managed projects getting started.
MRR: Do you think you'll return to France? Have you traveled through other parts of Latin America or the world?
In October the International Center of Popular Culture (CICP) in Paris has invited us to come give talks about the La Libertaria project and the indigenous struggles.
Esteban can be contacted at lalibertaria@gmail.com
http://acultura.org

THIS IS NOT THE END...

...of *Maximum Rocknroll*'s coverage of punk and immigration.

We would like to continue to run immigration-themed content as a regular feature in upcoming issues.

For information about contributing to future articles, please write to:

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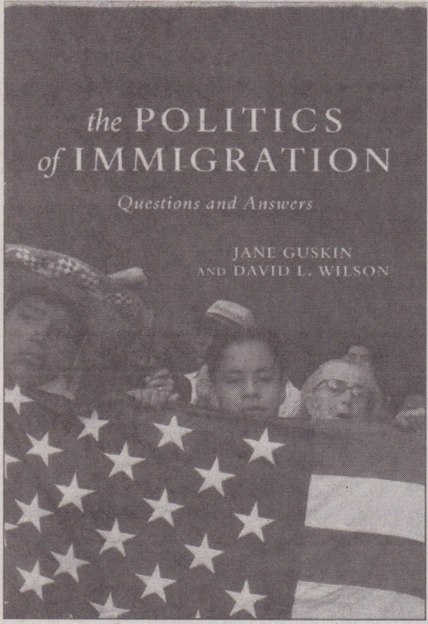

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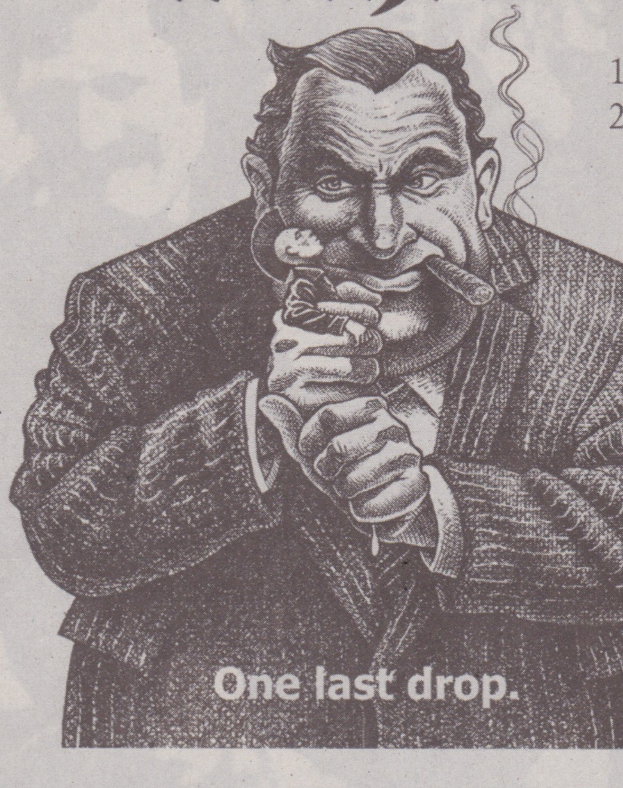

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04.09.07 TUESDAY / FINLAND helsinki - factory
05.09.07 WEDNESDAY / FINLANravelday with the
booze cruise to sweden
06.09.07 THURSDAY / SWEDEN
stockholm - kafe 44
07.09.07 FRIDAY / SWEDEN
gothenborg - unterjordan
08.09.07 SATURDAY / DENMARK
fredericia - ungdomshus
09.09.07 SUNDAY / GERMANY
berlin - koepi w/ KOLOKOL [NOR]
10.09.07 MONDAY / POLAND
poznan - rozbrat squat
11.09.07 TUESDAY / POLAND
warshaw - elba squat
12.09.07 WEDNESDAY / POLAND lublin - tektura
13.09.07 THURSDAY / POLAND
wroclaw - crk jagiellonczyka
14.09.07 FRIDAY / CZECH REP praha - 007
15.09.07 SATURDAY / CZECH REP.
brno - yacht club
16.09.07 SUNDAY / AUSTRIA vienna - ekh
17.09.07 MONDAY / SLOVENIA lubljana
18.09.07 TUESDAY / CROATIA zagreb / rijeka
19.09.07 WEDNESDAY / SERBIA belgrad
20.09.07 THURSDAY / MACEDONIA skopje
21.09.07 FRIDAY / GREECE kavala
22.09.07 SATURDAY / GREECE
thessaloniki - biologiko
23.09.07 SUNDAY / GREECE
athens - ks94 w/ ANTIMOB [GR]
24.09.07 MONDAY / GREECE patras - paratima w/
HIBERNATION [GR] ? ANTIMOB [GR]
25.09.07 TUESDAY / GREECE ferry to italy
26.09.07 WEDNESDAY / ITALY bari
27.09.07 THURSDAY / ITALY
roma - pirateria squat
28.09.07 FRIDAY / ITALY
cesena - al confino squat
29.09.07 SATURDAY / ITALY
venice - c.s. rivolta
30.09.07 SUNDAY / ITALY
bologna - atlantide squat
01.10.07 MONDAY / ITALY day off
02.10.07 TUESDAY / FRANCE
nice - le volume TBC
03.10.07 WEDNESDAY / SPAIN
barcelona w/ ETACARINAE
04.10.07 THURSDAY / SPAIN valencia TBC
05.10.07 FRIDAY / SPAIN zaragoza - arrebato
w/ TXIXAPARRAZTA [ESP]
06.10.07 SATURDAY / SPAIN llodio -
orbekooetxea squat w/ TXIXAPARRAZTA [ESP]
07.10.07 SUNDAY / SPAIN zarautz - putzuzulo
squat w/ TXIXAPARRAZTA [ESP]
08.10.07 MONDAY / FRANCE toulouse TBC
09.10.07 TUESDAY / FRANCE grenoble
10.10.07 WEDNESDAY / FRANCE st.
etienne - le lokal
11.10.07 THURSDAY / FRANCE
besancon - bar des arcades
12.10.07 FRIDAY / FRANCE paris
13.10.07 SATURDAY / UK london - grosvenour
14.10.07 SUNDAY / UK boston
15.10.07 MONDAY / UK manchester TBC
16.10.07 TUESDAY / IRL dublin
17.10.07 WEDNESDAY / IRL galway
18.10.07 THURSDAY / IRL belfast
19.10.07 FRIDAY / UK leeds
20.10.07 SATURDAY / UK
bradfort - 1 in 12 club
21.10.07 SUNDAY / SCO glasgow TBC
22.10.07 MONDAY / SCO edingburgh
23.10.07 TUESDAY / UK
newcastle upon tyne - chillingham
24.10.07 WEDNESDAY / UK hull - the new
adelphi club
25.10.07 THURSDAY / UK southhampton
26.10.07 FRIDAY / UK brighton - cowley club
27.10.07 SATURDAY / BELGIUM diest
28.10.07 SUNDAY / BELGIUM liege - carlo levi
29.10.07 MONDAY / FRANCE nancy - semtex
30.10.07 TUESDAY / GERMANY
frankfurt - au squat
31.10.07 WEDNESDAY / GERMANY freiburg - kts
01.11.07 THURSDAY / GERMANY tuebingen -
epplehaus w/ MASS STRANGULATION [DE]
03.11.07 SATURDAY / GERMANY
munchen - kafe kult
04.11.07 SUNDAY / GERMANY
nuernberg - kunstverein
05.11.07 MONDAY / GERMANY leipzig - zorro
06.11.07 TUESDAY / GERMANY
goettingen w/ BEHIND ENEMY LINES
07.11.07 WEDNESDAY / GERMANY
hannover - stumpf w/ BEHIND ENEMY LINES
08.11.07 THURSDAY / NETHERLANDS
hoogeeven - het podium w/ BEHIND ENEMY LINES
09.11.07 FRIDAY / GERMANY
duesseldorf - linkes zentrum/hinterhof w/
BEHIND ENEMY LINES
10.11.07 SATURDAY / GERMANY
bremen - friesenstrasse w/ BEHIND ENEMY LINES

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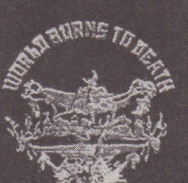

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IS THIS MY WINDOW the story of POLITICAL ASYLUM

BY LANCE HAHN

Despite being fronted by singer Ramsey Kanaan, founding member and still big muck-a-muck with AK Press, and despite their name, Political Asylum weren't the po-faced anarchos you might imagine them to be. In fact, the last time I saw them play, a matinee at Gilman Street in Berkeley, the guitar player was onstage wearing a giant rainbow 'fro wig!

Our story starts with Ramsey as a teen in the late '70s. Before punk, before the late '70s, music wasn't exactly his biggest interest.

Ramsey, vocalist, "Not quite sure how I got into punk, to be honest. Before '78 or '79, I didn't really listen to music at all. Never had a record player. Didn't listen to the radio. Music (in terms of listening) just wasn't a part of my life. Though I do remember going through an ABBA phase. Which makes total sense, of course, since they fucking rock. Ironically enough, one of my younger brothers (who would've been nine in 1977) was into punk. I remember him coming home with Sex Pistols 7"s, UK Subs, Damned, Sham 69, etc. He played me that stuff, and it didn't really do anything for me. Around '78 or '79 (aged 12/13), I just started getting into music. Started hanging out with other mates who were into music, and who would play stuff. We'd listen to the radio (John Peel, Kid Jensen, Richard Skinner). Watch all these bands on Top Of The Pops. And of course, I revisited my little brothers' record collection (who ironically by then, wasn't really into music anymore). The late-'70s and early-'80s really was a golden age of music as far as I'm concerned, and me and me mates who were into music listened to all sorts fairly indiscriminately. Punk had a great resonance for me, 'cos of the attitude and politics. But I also loved new wave/pop (the Vapors are still my all-time favorite band), and also a lot of the 'new' heavy metal/rock stuff that was coming out at the time—Iron Maiden, Saxon, Judas Priest, Trust, Hawkwind, Motörhead, etc. Basically, I was (and still am) into melody and harmony. I liked pretty much anything I could sing along to."

It's hard to say how Ramsey got involved with the making of music. Considering what he would go on to do in the publishing world, it would be nice to think that from the start he had things to say and saw singing as a vehicle for his ideas. But his beginnings as a singer were much more arbitrary.

Ramsey, "I guess the literal answer is that I became a singer by singing! As a kid, growing up, me mother was always singing to me and encouraging me to play an instrument. In primary school, for a few years I played the recorder! I guess I enjoyed that. I went on to play the French horn, until I was 17 or 18. So growing up, I was always participating in music. But singing was easy to do. You didn't have to play an instrument, you didn't have to cart any equipment around. You just had to open your mouth and go for it! Singing, and playing in bands early on, was very much an extension of hanging around with your mates in your bedroom. Instead of listening to music, we were making music, though it was typically bashed out (without drums) in a bedroom, either completely un-amplified (twanging away on electric guitar and bass and singing), or by putting the guitar and bass through your stereo amp and speakers..."

Before Political Asylum, Ramsey even had a short stint fronting a local new wave group. If only for entertainment (and possible blackmail) purposes, it's a shame no recordings exist.

Ramsey, "The band was called A Change In Blues. We never really got beyond the jamming in the bedroom stage. It was me and a couple of older guys from my high school. They were a lot more musical than me, could play, that sort of thing. They taught me a fair amount, and I loved playing with them. Brendan, the bass player, came up with the bass riff of Political Asylum's first ever song ("Disarm or Die"), basically as a joke, to show how easy this punk stuff was to churn out."

But as destiny would have it, Ramsey didn't last with the group for more than a few practices. In a prim and proper British way, he was asked to excuse himself from vocal duties.

Ramsey, "I didn't leave. I was kicked out (all very amicably, of course) 'cos my vocal delivery was too 'punk'... But they turned me onto a lot of great music, a lot of the early new wave/post punk stuff—early U2, Simple

Political Asylum

Minds, Joy Division, Scars, etc.”

Taking that as a cue, Ramsey started looking to get a punk band together.

Ramsey, “Two of my closest friends in high school were named Andy Hagan and Stephen Brown. We'd all hang out in each others' bedrooms, listening to music, stuff like that. Both Andy and Stephen played guitar. Andy not so good, Stephen really well. He basically listened to all kinds of rock and metal, and just taught himself by playing along to all these records. I believe in the first year of high school (probably around the time I was jamming with A Change In Blues), me and Andy and Stephen even performed a couple of songs at the High School 'talent night.' If I remember rightly, with them two on acoustic guitars, and me singing, we did a Beatles song, and a Status Quo song (early Quo, I hasten to add, from their rather fine *Two Headed Dog* album!). So, after getting the boot from the new wave combo, I guess me and Stephen started playing together more seriously. Again, largely jamming in each others' bedrooms and writing our own material. Actually, it was all our own material. The only cover version we ever did was the UK Subs' “Warhead,” and we never played that live. It wasn't until the *Fuck EMI* record was conceived, in the late '80s, that we introduced our one and only cover (Wire's “The 15th”) into our set... Anyway, we quickly recruited another chap from our year in high school, on bass, and we were away...

“Well, almost. We still needed a drummer. I met Spike (Chris Low), 'cos he was this young kid (a couple of years younger than us, and when you're 14 and 15, being 12 or 13 is *really* young!) who hung around the same indie record store in Stirling, looking like a punk in his leather jacket and Docs... and who, it also turned out, did an early anarcho-punk zine, called *Guilty Of What*. Anyways, it turned out he had a drum kit, so, we were off. Well, except that by that time, we'd lost the first bass-player, so for the first year or so, I had to play bass and sing, which was hard, 'cos I wasn't too good at either... certainly not both at once...”

Picking a random page out of the Big Dictionary of Potential Punk Band Names, they came up with the name Distraught. Essentially Political Asylum under a sillier name, Distraught came up with the original songs that first put the group on the map.

Ramsey, “Yup, we went through a bunch of early embarrassing names. I guess Distraught was one of the better ones. (At least we were a 'Dis' band long before it became fashionable!) I think we may have played a gig or two under that name, and I believe our first ever zine interview (in *Guilty Of What*—surprise, surprise) was under that name. It was the same songs...virtually all of which were to appear on the *Fresh Hate* demo...”

Maybe it was seeing that name in print for the first time and maybe it was just a generally indecisive nature of a teen punk band, but the group was soon un-distraught and Political Asylum.

Ramsey, “I guess 'cos we thought Political Asylum was less embarrassing than Distraught, or Axe Of Death (if I can recall right, Axe Of Death was one of the earlier names we bandied around!). Most names are embarrassing. I s'pose we thought Political Asylum was not as typically punk (like calling yourself Carnage or Destruction or whatever), but still put over that we were a political band (as opposed to calling oneself the Butterflies or whatever). But even as early teenagers, we all thought that Political Asylum was vaguely clichéd and embarrassing, but I guess you have to called something, right?”

Armed with a set of originals (though it would turn out that plagiarism played some role—property *is* theft), the group began playing live at any opportunity.

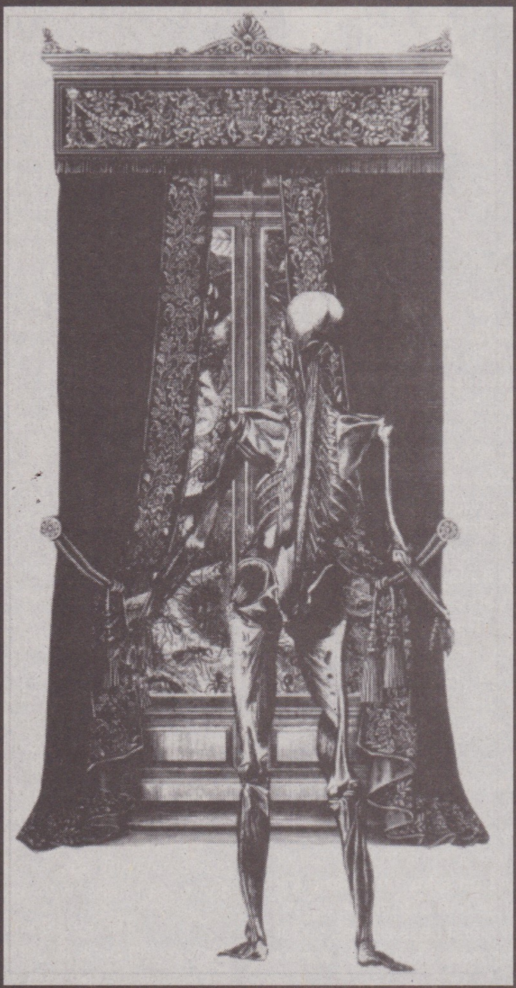
Ramsey, “The early gigs, like virtually all of the gigs we ever played, funnily enough, were largely gigs we organized ourselves, or were organized by other young kids. I can't remember who we first played with, at our first gig. It was in one of the villages outside of Stirling (the same town we were from, in Central Scotland), and there were some other punk bands playing. All of them small/local, with nothing released, like us. One of our older mates hired a minibus, and the band and a bunch of mates went to the gig. We played, were atrocious, and had a great time. As did our mates, and the audience, who covered us in gob. Horrible. Though at the time, you just accepted that as part of punk. Fortunately, that largely stopped (the gobbing on us) after that first gig. I believe the second gig we did was at our high school, at one of the periodic high school discos. Quite a few punks came with us, many of whom were not pupils at our high school. When we started playing, all the punks started dancing and pogoing about, and our school headmaster immediately jumped on stage, pulled the power, and said that we couldn't continue, unless everyone shuffled back from the stage, and sat down. So the audience did, we started the next song, and the punkers started jumping around again. Same deal with the headmaster. We only ended up playing, I believe, four songs before the headmaster shut down the gig, accusing us of inciting a riot. But most of the gigs we played in those early years were either put on by ourselves in local church halls, community centres, or by friends, doing the same thing in their villages. And actually, that didn't really change much, even after we moved to the big city of Edinburgh a few years later. Most of our gigs were either self-organized (or self-booked) into small bars, clubs, student unions, or were us playing similarly small venues that were booked by other kids or activist groups that we played benefits for... Typically, we were the headliners, especially after the first demo tape came out (and hence we had product, and started to get a name). While we occasionally played with bigger bands over the years (the Alternative, UK Subs, Disorder—all once each), typically we'd play small(ish) gigs, with either other small punk bands, or just as often, with non-punk bands, with us as the headliner.”

Though coming to anarchist politics at the same time as discovering punk in general, Ramsey took a roundabout way in coming to Crass and the growing anarcho punk “scene.”

Ramsey, “I guess 'cos of the politics, and 'cos it was punk. In

the late '70s, punk was this really huge broad church. Adam and The Ants, Public Image, Killing Joke, Crass, the Damned, the Ruts, Elvis Costello, the UK Subs, Angelic Upstarts, Stiff Little Fingers. All were punk, and punks tended to like 'em all. It wasn't neatly divided into all these little categories yet. There also wasn't that much of it. There wasn't a million bands out there, though there was loads of 'em...and you just tended to check out anything that was punk, or looked punk, or had a punk sounding name/record sleeve. Crass certainly slagged off the Clash on record, and the Exploited slagged off Crass on record, but most punks liked all three…

"I first got interested in Crass in particular because of their politics. I remember, in 1979, buying a Crass t-shirt, 'cos it said 'Anarchy, Peace, and Freedom' under the Crass logo, and I was into anarchy, peace, and freedom. I then had to get a Crass record, 'cos it was embarrassing wearing the t-shirt, having folks at school asking you what they were like, and not knowing! I think the first Crass record I bought was not actually a Crass record, but the first *Bullshit Detector* compilation. I loved some of the tracks on that, and a lot of the sentiment. The first Crass record I got, in 1979, was *Stations Of The Crass*. Again, I loved a lot of the politics/sentiment, but wasn't fussed on the music so much. Fortunately, anarcho-punk was musically (if not in terms of dress, doctrine, etc!) also a very broad church. And there were loads of anarcho-bands that played music a lot more to my ears' liking, than Crass. Zounds and the Poison Girls, for example."



Precociously well read as a pre-teen, Ramsey was certainly more open to the idea of revolutionary politics. It's still hard to say which came first in the punk versus politics, chicken versus egg question.

Ramsey, "I got into punk and politics at around the same time. And to be honest, I'm not sure how I got into anarchism/politics. I guess by the time I was 13, in 1979, I already had enough of an idea of what anarchy, peace, and freedom meant, that I wanted to buy a t-shirt that said that. The only thing I can think of, really, was that me parents always encouraged me to read. So while I hadn't read anything explicitly anarchist, as such, by the time I was 12 or 13, I had read, and was reading, all kinds of political literature—a lot of the classics—George Orwell, *All Quiet On The Western Front*, *Catch-22*, some Camus, *Brave New World*, etc. So mebbe that helped steer me down the 'correct' path?"

Immediately politically active (as well as intellectually voracious), Ramsey immersed himself in the anarcho politics of the day. Seeing as this just barely preceded Distraught, it made sense that Political Asylum would also take on this sort of content in their lyrics and actions.

Ramsey, "Yup, as soon as I discovered politics, I launched into it all with a passion. I read anything on anarchism I could get my hands on. I was a member of two libraries, and got all kinds of stuff (via inter-library loan) from the National Library. I got politically active initially in the peace/anti-nuclear movement (I bought my first anarchist paper, in 1979, on a CND—Campaign For Nuclear Disarmament—peace march, as it was being sold by these couple of punks; I remember one of them had a Damned 'Smash It Up' armband, and the other had the Drones 'Bone Idol' painted on the back of his leather jacket!), and also launched myself into the punk and political underground. I became a keen letter writer/correspondent/tape trader, and as Political Asylum started to get interviewed in fanzines, as a return favor, I started selling those zines at gigs and demonstrations. As I got into contact with more anarchists and 'political' folks, I also started distributing anarchist magazines, pamphlets, etc. And I guess the political activism and selling/publishing stuff has continued ever since! Certainly, political activism was a big part of the punk scene, especially the anarcho-punk scene at the time. And it was very much a part of my life, as was the whole underground zine/literature/distribution thing. I think its fair to say that I was one of the first folks at the time to do a distro and to sell stuff that wasn't just from my band, at gigs, demos, etc. I had the fortune in 1981 (or was it 1980?) to be at the big Zig Zag squat gig. There, while trying to sell my zines out of a poly bag, I saw these old dudes with beards (though of course, in retrospect, they were considerably younger than I am now!) behind a table, full of literature. That seemed to me to be a good idea. I befriended them, and it turned out they were from this radical/independent bookshop, in London, called Housmans. They put up with this annoying young kid with a thousand questions, and mentored me over the years in the ways of radical publishing, distribution, and so forth.

"As a band, virtually all of the shows we were played were benefits for someone or another. A lot of animal rights groups, prisoner support, and when the poll tax came along, anti-poll tax groups."

The group's first two releases were a live tape and 1983's *Fresh Hate* demo.

Ramsey, "The year before, we had recorded a 'live' tape, by renting out a hall, sticking a ghetto-blaster at one end, and playing our set at the other. That was our first recording experience. So, going into a studio was a big difference to that (though it was mostly the same songs). We recorded all 14 studio tracks in one day, and mixed 'em all on the second day. We were still bass-less, so we recorded the backing tracks (drums, guitar, and bass) live, and then Stephen went and overdubbed more guitar (and typically redid the bass, 'cos I was crap), and then I did the vocals. Unfortunately, we couldn't overdub the drums, 'cos they were crap too. Oh well. It was the first time any of us kids (aged 13, 14, and 15) had ever been into a studio. Stephen discovered all kinds of new effects that he couldn't reproduce in his bedroom, such as a flanger, so there's lots of effects (and flanger!) all over the recording…"

With an evocative title, *Fresh Hate* was probably named as an afterthought having more to do with the cover art than with the lyrics.

Ramsey, "I can't remember. The picture on the tape cover was of a cop beating up a protestor...so I guess it was one of them ambiguous things... I think it was meant to symbolize our renewed hatred against the state/system."

More than an album's worth of material, *Fresh Hate* was pretty good sounding for a cassette-only release. Like many other groups from the anarcho punk scene, Political Asylum took cassette releases as seriously as vinyl ones, and the result was a tape release that outsold many records of the time.

Ramsey, "Yup, most of them. Three of the tracks from that we rerecorded for our first 7", and a few of them appeared on later releases as live tracks. But basically, as far as we were concerned, our demo was a 'legitimate' release. It was a 55-minute, 15-track (the 14 studio tracks, plus one 'live' track taken from the aforementioned 'live' recording on the

POLITICAL ASYLUM

DISARM OR DIE. Over the horizon, over the hill/don't know what it is but I know it kills/over the horizon, over the hill/the missile is coming - it's time to take your pill//I see it coming, over the hill/everything is silent, death is still/praying to their god, hands in the air/but he's not listening, he doesn't care//While you slash our hospitals and our schools/you buy more of these obscene weapons/you take us all to be mindless fools/taken in with your lies and rules//You think you'll control us with the Russian threat/buy the bombs...it's a better bet/until the Russians, they realise/you're threatening them, and then you'll die//Disarm or die.

OXFORD STREET 48. On the 6th of June, 1982/48 people were arrested by the boys in blue/marching up Oxford Street, 500 strong/they'd committed no crime and they were doing no wrong//chorus : "Protection" they say, but protection from what?/"Freedom" we say - that's something we ain't got//We've got no fucking freedom in the eyes of the police/not even allowed our right to free speech/government and law keep us in line, telling us what to do/from the cradle to the grave they impose restrictions on you//chorus.

NOTHING LEFT. Words are useless to describe/the scenes of horror I saw in her eyes/she was lying there, rotting on the bed/decaying, decomposing, hopelessly dead//Words are useless to describe/centuries have passed since she died/victim of a holocaust, rotting her flesh/bleeding her sole, no peaceful rest.

CARNAGE. Visions of war fill my head/screaming children - then they're dead/destruction of cities blinding my eyes/as the planes fly over i'm left to ask "Why?"//chorus : Carnage//It's a swing to the right at the children's expense/the money for schools spent on defence/not a word of truth to be seen/chaery propaganda feeds the mainstream//chorus//But it's a carnage we all subscribe to/stupid women say "Go and fight!"/stupid men go and fight...and then they die.

TRUST IN ME. chorus : Radiation burns/pollution withers/defend and insure/lock up and secure/protect and survive//We buy our bullets, our bullets and our bombs/the currency is fear, the racket is protection/those who deal in arms, they grow rich/if you don't agree with them, they'll pull the switch//chorus//You are lost, lost, lost/in a confusion of rules and labels/trust in me, break yourself free/trust in me.

WINTER OF OUR DISCONTENT. The fields have turned grey and the trees have lost their leaves/there's no-one to be seen, only crosses and wreaths/row upon row of graves, lying there/they died for their country but it doesn't seem to care//chorus : And I don't wanna die//As the harsh wind whips up and the rain turns to snow/the priest said they died for god but how were they to know/that when they joined up, their heads held high/that in the next 6 months they were gonna die?//chorus//The widow enters the field, dressed in black/trying to come to terms with what's happened to her Jack/she holds in her hand a medal from the state/but her mind is empty, she can't even hate//chorus//I've had enough of fighting, for them, their war/i'm sick of it now, I don't want it no more/if they want to maim let them get on with it/but leave me out of their self made shit!//chorus.

THE SLAUGHTER. Celebrate this madness/with another demonstration/banners flying in the wind/polluted by our sadness//Want to be a rebel?/want to shake the world?/but there's no one there to show you/so the cause is washed away//Mutilate your being/into another one of them/now there's no expression/the slaughterhouse succeeds.

PLAY NO PART. Anguish and pain/another son has died in vain/hate and war/what's the point of it all?/to satisfy the power and the greed of man/must we have another Afghanistan?//Play no part in their fucking wargames//Anguish and pain/another son has died in vain/hate and war/what's the point of it all?/to satisfy the power and the greed of man/must we have a second Vietnam//Resist!

SYSTEM OF WAR. The dead bodies on the battlefield/prove they would use our flesh as a shield/and Brixton's riot was a result of the hate/towards this system we help to create//Will we always have the threat of war?/will we always have an open sore?/war is a part of the system/war is a part of the system//People die in police custody/but who pays for the police force?/you and me/and if they ever drop the bomb/the ones who caused it to be dropped/will be alive and we'll be gone//War is a part of the system.

AUTONOMOUS YOUTH. You can write "Punk's not dead!" on your back/perhaps it's intelligence that you lack/punk became a fashion like mod and ted/reject these media created movements and use your own fucking head/you don't have to wear the punk uniform/you don't have to join a fashion - you don't have to conform/youth cults are a means by which media manipulates the youth/punk started as a threat to the system, it exposed the truth//But now it's been corrupted and exploited by the press/what started as a good thing is now a fucking mess/the media destroys...rival factions is what they create/turn one tribe against another, your label could be your fate!/we're all in the palm of the system's hand as long as we allign ourselves/with some fucking stupid movement that in the end will sell/out to the business-men with their Rolls Royces, cigars and cash/ready to latch on to the latest craze in a cheque-book waving dash//It's these bastards that fucked up punk from the start/when the next fashion comes along you can bet they'll play their part/in using it to fill their pockets, filling it up with shit/ready to develope another stereotype, another identikit/wear the clothes the rip-off merchants sell to you/all movements are the same, the leaders use them to divide and rule/so when the next trend comes along will you join its ranks/and be another mindless moron along with all the other wanks?

WHERE NEXT? Our lives are in the hands of computers and machines/tools of a government's power greedy dreams/the nuclear devastation of 1945 was a nightmare that had to be seen/and world war 3 won't be a case of "Fight for your country, god and queen"//Where next after Hiroshima?/where are you gonna be when the atom bombs fall?/where next after Nagasaki?/do you really expect another call-up to call?//You'll never get anywhere by smashing the state/non-violent direct action will be the system's fate/you won't get rid of religion by blowing up a cathedral/rejection of their morals is how it will fall//Where next after Brixton?/where are you gonna be when the petrol bombs fly?/where next after Southall?/are you gonna let racial agression pass you by?

PASSIVE FIST. Well, i've had enough of being pushed around and screwed into the floor/gonna pack my bags, grab my coat and run right out the door/just 'cos i'm a pacifist don't mean i'll take abuse/I ain't no wooden puppet to be put to your own use//Oh, you can point the finger and tell me who I am/yes, you can point the finger but I couldn't give a damn/don't think i'm a punchbag for you to push around and shove/I don't want your arrogance, right now i've had enough//So you can stuff your cheap heroics/i'm a pacifist/i'm a pacifist/i'm a pacifist/yes, i'm a passive fist...right?

INDOCTRINATION. 1984 knocking on your door/you don't care, you don't give a fuck/it's alright for you - you've got the power/the power to let us die//We're all a line of puppets on the leader's hand/conditioned by the government so they can rule this land//chorus : Conditioned from the day we're born to the day we die/indoctrination//They feed you religion and sex on TV/you believe that you're equal, classless and free//chorus.

DO THEY CARE? "Crisis!" they say/but it's not funny/when lives are squandered/we still pay the money/the welfare is cut/to pay the bill/but it ain't just the enemy/it's the OAP's they kill//chorus : But do they care?//They put you in the army/with a gun in your hand/tell you to slaughter people/you just don't understand/so you throw away your gun/refuse to vent their hate/they say "You're a traitor!"/but that does not placate//chorus//The bell tolls/the death knell calls/for who? For me!/the bell tolls/the death knell calls/for who? For me!//chorus.

WHITE POPPIES. From the cradle to the grave we are conditioned to accept war and violence as an inevitable part of our existance...Resist!

ghetto blaster) album. It came with a 'real' printed cover (well, initially photocopied, though later actually printed by a real printer—Andy, of the APF Brigade, who worked as a printer), with a fold-out lyric sheet. We sold them to independent record stores on consignment, ourselves at gigs, and through the huge underground punk network. Various tape labels reproduced it (including Bluurg), and I reckon all told, it must've sold around 5,000 copies... We didn't see the point of doing a record as such. Tapes were cheaper, could fit on more music, so why bother with vinyl?"

Though it does start with the most outrageously stolen riffs in the history of punk, "Trust In Me" quickly becomes its own thing, almost reminiscent of Bauhaus with its echo-drenched vocals and guitar harmonics.

Radiation burns
Pollution withers
Defend and insure
Lock up and secure
Protect and survive

Ramsey, "Like many of our early songs, it was a mish mash of ripped off (er, borrowed) music and lyrics. The intro bass-riff is a note-for-note copy of Black Flag's 'Six Pack' (unlike most British punks, I was a huge fan of American hardcore—the tape-trading community was very international!), while lots of the lyrics were cut and paste Poison Girls statements! Hey, I never claimed Political Asylum was original! I guess what made us stand out, really, was the fact that I was, by and large, the only punk in the band. We did have punks over the years (Tam on drums, Pete on rhythm guitar, for the brief period when we were a five-piece, the original drummer Spike), but I was the only punker songwriter. So, musically, we really sounded a lot more, I dunno, rock, than punk, in many ways. And we didn't really look all that punk either. There's been more likely to be a Status Quo or Saxon t-shirt worn by a band member than a punk one. And long hair was a lot more common than not..."

They followed up *Fresh Hate* with a six-song cassette released the following year. *Valium For The Masses*, though much shorter, was of a higher production quality.

Ramsey, "We did less songs (six studio songs on that demo—we actually tried to record seven, but one of them didn't really sound right, so we never finished the recording, and soon after dropped it from our set), in a lot more time. So I guess it sounds a lot better. Better playing on it, mebbe a bit more mature songwriting, and better quality. I think that was recorded over five or six evenings... I think our songwriting (me and Stephen did all of the songwriting), and Stephen's guitar-playing especially, was getting pretty damn good."

The title and cover art came from a friend who was helping out the band in a few areas.

Ramsey, "The cover was of a TV set, with all this stuff going on in the TV. I guess it was about the media, and TV. The cover was conceptualized and drawn by our buddy Dallas (who also sang backing vocals on one track), who was the then lead singer for Dan, from the original line-up (and of course, in my humble opinion, the best!)."

The addition of Norman Thompson on bass and Tam on drums helped broaden the group's sound, most noticeable on songs like "Cat's Eyes." The group's melodic potential played out over the poem/song of "The Responsibility."

Ramsey, "I was never that good at writing lyrics (nor music for that matter, it could be argued, I'm sure). 'The Responsibility' was a poem me and Stephen got in class at high school. It was all about how everyone is responsible for the system (a form of liberal political analysis I would strongly disagree with now). It goes through all the stages of having a nuclear bomb dropped—from the guy that pushes the button, to the lineage of order givers and takers, to those that manufacture it, to those that 'allow' such things to happen in their name. It is of course, a very unsophisticated analysis of power-relations in society, but we thought it was good as teenagers, and put it to music. I believe we credited Peter Appleton (the poet—whoever he was/is) in the lyric sheet, though of course, we never got permission..."

After this series of successful cassette releases, Political Asylum were approached by Children of the Revolution (COR) Records to release their debut vinyl.

Ramsey, "As I said, we were quite happy putting out demo tapes as releases. But, we played this big gig in Belfast, I believe in 1984—and I believe it was a big benefit set up by the folks would later become Warzone.

It was us, Disorder, the Subhumans (though I think they never showed up), and a bunch of other bands. We took the train and ferry over to Northern Ireland from Scotland, and played. After our set, this figure comes flying over to us, and is throwing all these compliments and stuff at us. He had a thick English accent, and we had thick Scottish accents, and we couldn't really understand what he was saying. As it turns out, he was offering to release a record by us, but we thought he just wanted to buy some demo tapes (which we sold him). Fortunately, for everyone concerned, it ended up that us, Disorder, and the strange figure (who was Tim Bennet, maestro of the fledgling Children Of The Revolution Records, based out of Bristol) all ended up being put up in the same apartment that night. And after the gig, in some council flat in Belfast, Tim managed to make it understood that not only was he a record label boss, but that he wanted to do a record with us. We said sure."

Political Asylum's *Winter* was one of 14 releases for COR in 1985, following a 12" by fellow Scots AOA. With a rough but sharp recording, the group melded their pop sensibilities with some crazy guitar playing that in a less melodic band would probably just seem totally over the top. With that sort of busy, metallic yet tuneful guitar playing, Political Asylum were in a way setting the stage for groups like Dan, Leatherface and Life But How To Live It?

Ramsey, "Pretty much the same as *Valium For The Masses*. We worked with the same couple of engineers—one of whom, Ralph Hardie, was to become a good buddy, both personally, and of the band, and was to do a bunch of other recordings with us. Again, as with every recording we ever did, we didn't have much studio time because we were paying for it ourselves and didn't have much of a budget. I think the three tracks were recorded in one weekend. The only big difference was that we used a drum-machine for the drums. We programmed it in, and then Tam (our then drummer) just played the cymbals 'live' over it, and then we laid down the guitars (lots of them), bass and vocals."

The best example of guitar nerdiness is the intro to the classic political pop song "Do They Care." The anarcho version of "Eruption," a wave of guitar hammer-ons and pull-offs builds into Stiff Little Fingers-like pop.

Crisis they say
But it's not funny
When lives are squandered
We still pay the money
Welfare is cut
To foot the bill
So it ain't just the enemy
It's OAP's they kill

Ramsey, "That was an early song. Fairly clichéd, amateurish lyrics, about being fucked over the 'system.' Do they care? ('They' meaning 'them,' the system, 'the man.') Do they fuck!"

Part of the appeal of Political Asylum was that they certainly didn't sound like an anarcho band as far as not being a crusty thrash band, not being semi-gothic or grim, and not being experimental or avant-garde. Their music was for the most part very melodic.

Ramsey, "Same stuff as always really. Lots of punk. Lots of new wave/power-pop. Lots of rock/metal. Some of the political folk. Stephen turned me onto lots of rock/metal. I turned him onto lots of punk. He introduced me to Trust and Dire Straits. I got him into Amebix and Christy Moore."

A lot of bands at the time used their first EP or even their demo tape as a means to tour the country as much as possible. Political Asylum would only tour once and mostly stuck to one-off gigs.

Ramsey, "Political Asylum always operated out of the mainstream. Not just the mainstream of the music industry, but of punk, and of anarcho-punk. As in the early '80s, in the mid-'80s, our gigs would typically be self-organized/booked, in a small venue (a pub, small club, youth centre, church hall, student union), either organized by ourselves some other kid. We never had a booker, a manager, or an active record label. We never even had a roadie. We did everything ourselves. Hence, the gigs we typically played were organized by ourselves, or in other towns/villages, by other kids doing it themselves. We rarely played even the established 'punk' venues. We did play at the Station in Gateshead once and the Bunker in Sunderland once. But more typically it'd be in the village hall, with us headlining, over a couple of local bands. Or playing at some pub in Edinburgh, with a local rock band, or a benefit for whomever at a student union.

"As such, our gigs were not 'typical' at all. There tended to be less violent, more of the close-knit camaraderie of a bunch of outsiders, doing it themselves with their mates and kindred spirits.

"Until the Thatcher on Acid/Danbert Nobacon/Political Asylum tour in '89, we never toured with another band, and typically headlined. Over the years, we did play with bands that would go on to become considerably more famous than us as support bands (Napalm Death in '86, NOFX in '88), but such is life…"

As far as getting to gigs, the group of kids were mostly limited to public transportation. It was during this time in the mid-'80s that a promotional gimmick by Mars candy bars would help several bands (Political Asylum, Flowers In The Dustbin, etc.) travel for cheap.

Ramsey, "I dunno if other people did. We certainly did it a lot. Partly out of necessity. When we started, we were in our teens. We didn't have much money. When we moved to Edinburgh when we were 17 and 18, we were still young, unemployed and/or students, and even if we knew how to drive (I don't think anyone in the band could; at the time, you couldn't hire a van till you were 21. So, literally every gig we played, anywhere in Britain, we'd have to get there by public transport (trains or buses), or occasionally, taking public transport to another town, where we would drive down in another band's van together. So, we'd just take our sleeping bags, change of clothes, tapes and literature (and later 7"s) to sell, our guitars, Stephen's small guitar amp, and drumsticks, and that was that. We even did our first European tour (18 dates, three countries, in three weeks) in 1987 that method, taking trains!

"Anyways, National Express buses (the main inter-city bus company) had this deal with Mars (the confectioners), that if you cut out the labels from Mars bars and affixed them to this ticket, you could get half price travel on the buses. We financed/subsidized numerous gigs and a couple of tours of England that way.

"The only problem was, there was a big campaign against Mars at the time from various animal rights organizations, wanting folks to boycott Mars, 'cos they were drilling monkey's teeth and whatnot. Political Asylum as a band were always pretty honest and up-front about what we did and why. We admitted that our drummer wasn't a vegetarian (the rest of the band were). And that we used these Mars Bars tickets to get around. That meant that some of the more holier-than-thou anarchos (and there were quite a few of them) gave us a lot of shit for such transgressions. Plus, we didn't look very punk, and had lots of guitar solos. We didn't really care. I mean, we did care about the monkeys (and indeed, played loads of benefits for said animal rights groups), but we also had a rather pragmatic class analysis of the whole thing. It was the only way we could afford to play anywhere for free! Oh well."

For some strange reason, skinheads were drawn to Political Asylum gigs and not just for the sake of smashing them up. Maybe it was that some of their more tuneful moments weren't too far removed from Cock Sparrer. But skinheads began turning up at Political Asylum gigs in numbers that would inevitably lead to violence.

Ramsey, "I guess it's difficult to separate the two, really, isn't it? There were lots of skins at shows in Scotland in the early/mid-'80s. And for some reason, they really liked Political Asylum! I have no idea why. Mebbe 'cos we were a bit more tuneful than most of our punker contemporaries? I vividly remember one gig. It was in Kircaldy, this small town just north of Edinburgh. In a mining area, full of villages and small towns, all pretty poor, and typical punk/skinhead territory. It was an anarcho-punk gig. I can't remember who else was playing, but we were on second-to-last, before the headliners, the Alternative. The Alternative really fancied themselves at the time as Scotland's Crass, and were very dismissive of Political Asylum.

Presumably 'cos we weren't all vegetarians, and didn't all wear black. As always, we went through on the train, borrowed some other band's gear, and were pretty horrified to find that a large minority of the audience (perhaps as much as 60 or so of the 200 assembled music lovers) were skinheads. Even worse, they were all sitting at the front of the stage, waiting for us to come on. As we're tuning up, getting ready to play, our long-haired bassist, Norman, walks to the front of the stage, complete with his brown leather vest with Saxon patch on the back, and makes (presumably he thinks, as a joke, since he was in no way a psychotic brawler) to spit on the skinheads sitting below. I tried to melt into the mike stand and prepared for imminent death. But as soon as we started playing, the skins, en masse, got up and started dancing. And after we played, they all came up and introduced themselves and bought our demo tapes. We tried not to stare too obviously at their horrendously bad facial tattoos, and then caught the last train home to Edinburgh. We later heard that the same skins had promptly assaulted the Alternative, and the gig ended in a massive fight. Most skins were not Nazis (though I'm sure many were idiots). In Edinburgh, in the later '80s, there were fairly few overtly Nazi skins. They never came to our gigs, presumably as they knew that we weren't too tolerant of Nazis, and we were identified with a small faction of the Edinburgh punk scene who were very overtly anti-Nazi (as opposed to the majority, including Oi Polloi, who didn't think the Nazis were a problem—presumably 'cos they were largely white, and male, and very afraid), and who, at a couple of shows (not Political Asylum shows), kicked the shit out of them, at which point they stopped coming to punk shows."

Though the group would never play with the biggest acts like Crass or Flux or Subhumans, through persistent self-organized gigs and extensive correspondence, many anarchos were familiar with the group.

Ramsey, "We were definitely not part of any anarcho-scene. I personally corresponded, and was friends with, lots of folks in 'the scene,' but they tended to be the 'smaller' lights (bands like APF Brigade, the Apostles, folks who would go on to form the mid-'80s generation of bands, like the Famous Imposters). We never made it onto a *Bullshit* compilation; we never played with any of the name anarcho bands. But, that was also true of the punk scene in general. I guess we were really 'underground,' and just doing our own thing."

1986 saw the band playing loads of gigs but also recording another cassette release. Recorded to four-track, the tape was more of a cleaned up practice tape to showcase the new line-up of the band.

Ramsey, "Same as before really. Playing gigs, writing songs, getting on with it. In '85/'86 we got Keith, our longest serving drummer, and Ewan, our longest serving bassist. Both blossomed into rather fine musicians. And we recorded and released our third 'demo' tape. This wasn't actually recorded in a studio, but was recorded live in our practice room, onto a four-track. The backing tracks were all recorded live (bass, guitar, and drums), by four microphones strategically placed around the room by our old engineer buddy Ralph Hardie. He then mixed those four tracks down to two, leaving two tracks for me to record the vocals over. I like that tape a lot too. By then, we were sounding pretty good as live band, I reckon. That was the proof..."

In 1987 the band would release their second piece of vinyl, the *Someday* 12" EP for Germany's We Bite Records.

Ramsey, "Like with COR Records, we went with We Bit basically 'cos they offered. Tomas and Margit had started out as a distro, then called New Age. And they'd bought a lot of our *Winter* 7", and sold 'em in Germany. I guess they had a relatively new label, and they really liked us and offered to release a record. So we did. Actually, at the time, they were doing loads of really great records. They did the first Spermbirds LP, first Die Walter 11 LP, first Jingo De Lunch record, all classic stuff. As before, we paid for everything, and tried to get the best out of the studio in a short time. So, we only had time to seven tracks, so it became a mini-LP. We Bite released it in Germany. It was meant to be released in the UK by a small Scottish indie label from Edinburgh called Big Noise. But they folded soon after it was recorded, so it only ever came out in Germany..."

As the title track suggests, the group were further distancing themselves from the grim, fatalistic images coming from many other anarcho bands.

As my mind slips from my body
I know a small battle is won
For as I slip quietly backwards
Another ten souls wander on
And the goals at the end of the tunnel
Are there to be reached someday
And as darkness fades ever further away
We know hope is here

Ramsey, "I guess it was an attempt at writing a positive, as opposed to negative doom and gloom song. Keep on fighting, keep on keepin' on; we'll get there in the end type stuff..."

Producing the record themselves in a decent studio, the mini-LP was a bit of trial by fire.

Ramsey, "Again, I think we were learning more (as we were going along) about what to do, and what not to do, in the studio. And the possibilities. I think a lot of the arrangements on the songs are really good. As usual, we were hampered by time and by producing it all ourselves, so a lot of quite incredible guitar-ing is lost. The drums were played (live) on an electronic kit, and then fucked with, to make 'em all in time. Then the cymbals were overdubbed live, as were the backing tracks. Then vocals. Recording that album was the beginning of the split between me and Stephen. Basically, he was wanting to play more slower/rock stuff, and I was wanting to play a bit more faster, melodic hardcore stuff..."

Despite it being a very clean, tight pop record, the group felt let down by the results of their own limitations in studio knowledge.

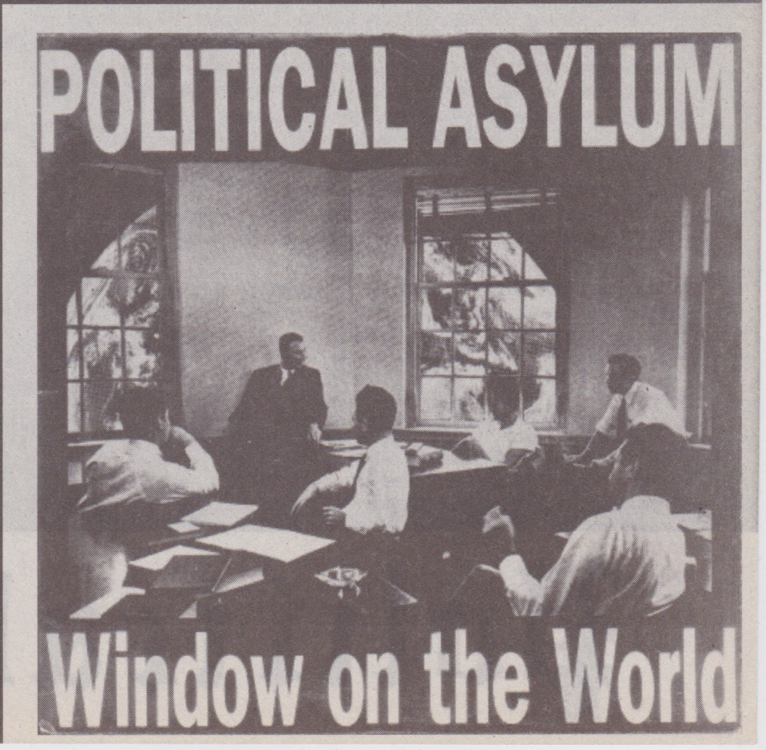
Ramsey, "At the time, not really. I thought it was OK. Thought it could've been a lot better. Though listening back, it sounds pretty good in retrospect!"

To support that record, the group went off on a European tour that summer. At the end of the trip, founding guitar player Stephen would leave the group. He was replaced, oddly enough, by Steven.

Ramsey, "Stephen basically wanted to play more radio friendly rock music. After our first European tour, in July of '87, he quit. The last date in Germany was his last-ever gig with the band. It was sad, but an inevitable parting of the ways over the hoary old 'musical differences.' Steven was found through the painful process of advertising for, and auditioning, a guitarist. We didn't really know anyone to fill Stephen's considerable axe-wielding shoes, so we had to just advertise, and audition. That was pretty bad, but eventually Stevie turned up, and we carried on. Less flash guitar, more melodic rock..."

One of the outcomes of that summer tour was a friendship with the Pissed Boys from Lubeck. Lubeck is a strange German town full of left-wing skinheads and dogs. The friendship would spawn a split EP.

Ramsey, "The Pissed Boys were a wonderful German trio from the town of Lubeck. I believe that they had also just released a record on We Bite, and they were our principal tour partners on about half of that first European tour. In their hometown of Lubeck, there was an incredible self-organized 'complex' that included a couple of concert halls, a bar, folk



living there, and a recording studio. So, when we played at the Alternative in Lubeck on that tour, it was agreed that a couple of songs from each band would be recorded live (via the 16-track studio next door) for potential release. I believe each band had three tracks from the set recorded, and two apiece were released. It was mixed in the studio by the German engineer Rolf, but after playing the show, we had nothing more to do with it. There was no overdubs added or anything."

For a group of broke kids, it made sense that Political Asylum were mostly documented through live board recordings.

Ramsey, "Studio time was always really expensive for us. We paid for everything, and all the records we did were largely 'cos folks offered to put something out. And typically, when asked, we didn't really have 'anything.' We also thought we sounded pretty good live, that actually, we were a pretty decent band—certainly later on..."

The Pissed Boys, through their self-run label, approached Political Asylum about a split EP.

Ramsey, "Like most records we did, the genesis didn't come from us. We were offered it. They said 'We can record a couple of songs from your gig and release 'em.' We said sure, sounds great...

"Fuck Your Brains Records was the label run by the Pissed Boys. They sent us over some copies, and that was that, really. I think that may have been the only release on the label, but I could be wrong. By 1988, when we did our second European tour, the Pissed Boys were no more..."

The live tracks on this split greatly represented to two sides of Political Asylum with the raging "Passive Fist" and U2-reminiscent "System of War."

The dead bodies on the battlefield
Prove they would use our flesh as a shield
And Brixton's riot was a result of the hate
Towards the system we all help to create
Will we always have the threat of war
Will we always have an open sore

The next year, the group started work on what would eventually become the *Window on the World* LP.

Ramsey, "That was kind of weird, really. We weren't that happy with the way *Someday* turned out. So we took the tapes back into the studios, or rather, the drum backing tracks, speeded some of 'em up, and rerecorded the guitars, cymbals and vocals. Again, it was sort of like all of our recording processes. No money, and very rushed..."

Half refitted songs from the previous 12", the other side of the record would be made up of a live recording.

Ramsey, "Well, literally, they went back to the *Someday* tapes. The other side of the record was part of live set. Again, on the second date of the tour with Thatcher On Acid and Danbert Nobacon, buddies of Thatcher On Acid recorded the gig on their eight-track mixer, and we got a tape of that. We just used that live tape as the other side of the *Window* record. As before, it was a mixture of us thinking we actually sounded pretty good live, despite the lack of overdubs (and hence you can hear the out of tune singing, Stevie breaking two strings—and changing his guitar *twice* and playing on—during one song, etc.), and not really having the resources to record a full album any other way. So it was a mixture of songs that had appeared on previous demos, and new songs making their debut that had never been recorded in a studio (and never would) on the live side..."

Having met Thatcher On Acid while both were on touring on the continent, a tour was organized for the two bands, plus Danbert Nobacon of Chumbawamba, who was about to release a 7" on Rugger Bugger.

Ramsey, "I believe the tour was largely the brainchild of Sean (of Wat Tyler fame) and Ben (of Thatcher On Acid). They certainly did virtually all of the organizing of the shows, and the logistics of the tour. I think we did 18 gigs in 21 days, all around England, with one show in Edinburgh which we organized. The entire tour was a benefit for various anti-poll tax and anarchist groups, with the monies from each night being given to the local anti-poll tax group."

Organized as a fundraising tour, the event was the quintessence of the DIY aspect of anarcho punk and the last major anarcho event of the decade.

Ramsey, "The tour was great. We played a lot of wonderful shows, met some great folks, and the three bands got on real well. I already knew Danbert and Sean and Thatcher On Acid, but it all turned out real good. Thatcher On Acid (or was it Chumbawamba?) won the Bradford football tournament, but I scored the best goal, by far. I think all three bands were a great mix of folks who were serious about our politics, without being dour and humorless. And I believe we raised a lot of money for the various beneficiaries... And it was a great example of a DIY tour."

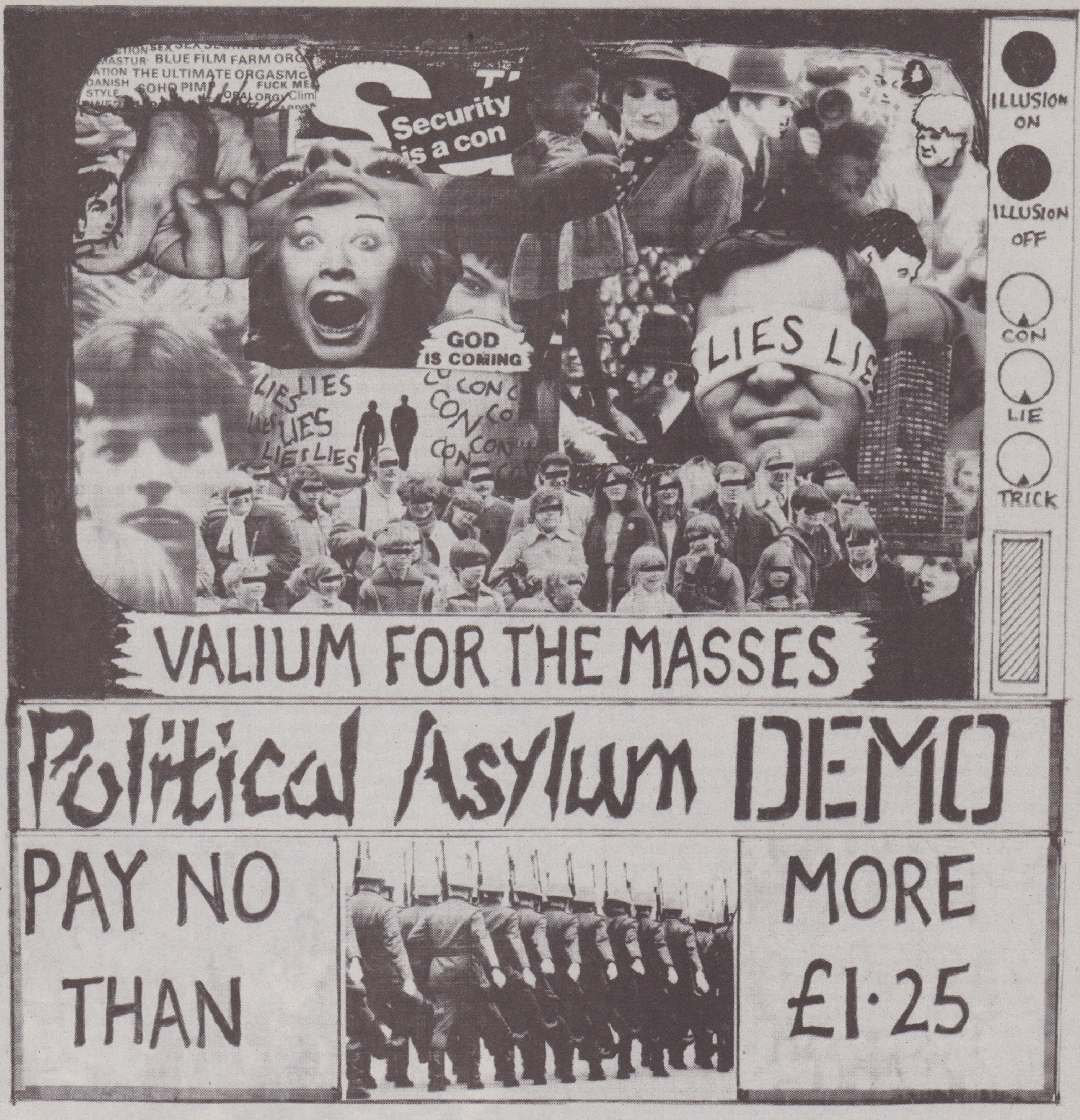
Having come home from the tour with a live recording they were happy with, they were able to piece together *Window on the World*, even though the record still wouldn't come out until 1990.

Ramsey, "I'm partial to a lot of them. I guess on that record, my favorite would probably be the title track, 'Window on the World.'"

Well if I pulled the curtains wide
Confusion and uncertainty
Would be staring straight back at me
Illusion or reality

Ramsey, "It seemed like a good title. Y'know, pretty vague and ambiguous, and one could read lots of stuff into it, if one was so inclined. I really liked that song, as it was a great song musically, taking us into a more melodic hardcore direction (by that time, I had introduced the band to

Political Asylum



mid-'80s American bands like Hüsker Dü, Dag Nasty, Descendents, Moving Targets), and was a great collaborative songwriting process with Keith (our drummer, and by far the most musically gifted member of the band), me, and Stevie…"

Originally recorded for hardcore label Looney Tunes, the record would eventually be licensed around the world.

Ramsey, "Again, 'cos they were interested. Working with them was pretty crap. I've no idea what they did with the record. As with every other label, we were never paid, though to be fair; all the labels did give us a certain amount of records to sell ourselves. I've no idea how any of our records sold. It was also released by our buddy Al in Canada, on his own label Electrode Records, and by some label in Germany that I'd never heard of before or since (they were friends with Looney Tunes, I believe). I know that Al did his own Canadian pressing of the record. I'm presuming the Germans did their own pressing, but I don't know for sure…"

The decade ended with Political Asylum touring the US with the end in San Francisco in time for the Without Borders Anarchist Gathering. They started by running fanzine ads looking for a likeminded band to tour with.

Ramsey, "It was all put together by Al. Al was this amazing old punk rocker (he was around in the early days of Toronto punk) that I met through corresponding/tape trading. He was a huge Political Asylum fan in 1988; I went to Toronto to the Anarchist Gathering there. Al put me up, and a friendship was forged. In 1989, I wanted to go to the Without Borders anarchist conference in San Francisco. So, Al basically organized some gigs that would end up in SF, for the conference... I'm presuming the ad in

MRR was placed by Al..."

They wound up sorting out a tour with Colorado hardcore band Dead Silence.

Ramsey, "Again, that was all organized by Al. We (the band, and Al) traveled in this VW camper van, with Jon and Julie, a couple of Canadian friends of Al. We flew into Boulder, hometown of Dead Silence, where Al had driven from Canada. Dead Silence also turned out to be gracious hosts and incredibly nice guys, which more than compensated for the fact that we thought that their music was atrocious! We thought it bizarre that they didn't ever want to soundcheck."

With most groups coming over from Europe having a tough time of it, by going a purely DIY route, Political Asylum wound up having quite a successful trip.

Ramsey, "It was great. It was very much a culture-shock. First time any of us had been in the States. Very educational. Again, we met some great folks, had a great time, raised a fair bit of money for the various benefits we played (as usual, every gig we played was a benefit, and we gave away virtually all the money we were paid). It was more like a holiday for us really.

"We were never a 'professional' band. We never made any money off of the band, and had never tried to live from it. By 1988, we were fairly popular, I guess. I remember we did sit down and have a conversation about whether it was worth trying to go 'professional' (i.e. to make a living from the band). We reckoned that if we could/did tour for 4-6 months of the year, and released an album every year or so, that we could, indeed, live from the music. None of us wanted to go that route. We really loved making music, and to do that would just turn it into a chore/job, and we presumed, kill it for us..."

The event was pivotal for many people. It was certainly a big part of how I wound up in the Bay. The same was true for Ramsey, though it took him a little longer.

Ramsey, "It blew my mind in many ways. The Festival was huge. Thousands of folks. Hundreds of events. I met all kinds of folks that I had previously corresponded with, did work with through AK Press, and/or had heard about—folks like John Yates, Freddie Baer, Martin Sprouse, the *MRR* folks, Bound Together Anarchist Bookstore, etc. Made many great friends/comrades, many of whom remain so nearly 20 years later. The band played three gigs for/around the Festival, and we all attended various workshops/events as part of the weeklong activities. I ate my first burrito, fell in love with the food and the weather, and promised that I'd move to the Bay Area. Took me five years, but I did..."

Soon after returning from the States, the members literally split into different directions. Band functions became more sporadic. The result was the group's last recording, the *How The West Was Won* 10" on Allied Recordings.

Ramsey, "I guess coming to America was a pretty mind-expanding experience for us all. And certainly put into context/contrast a lot of the drawbacks of dear old Britain. Pretty much on returning from America in the summer of '89, Stevie emigrated to Holland, and Ewan, our bassist, emigrated to Australia a year later. Only me and Keith remained in Edinburgh. We did trundle on. We did a lot of acoustic stuff, with Keith and Stevie on acoustic guitars, when Stevie would come back to the UK, and did some European gigs acoustic.

"Stevie had started jamming with some Dutchmen, and a couple of times, me and Keith went over to Europe, and we did some rehearsing, and a little bit of gigging, and recording. The 10" was a bit of a mish-mash. The three studio tracks were recorded on two separate trips on two separate sessions. The three acoustic tracks were recorded live on air, as part of session for this local radio station, called Radio Razor, in Holland. I think it's a pretty good record, and a fine testament to where we were at the time—half studio, half acoustic—and where we were headed musically. But its disparateness was a fair representation of the dislocation of having band members on different continents."

With the band so spread out and momentum waning, the group eventually split in the early '90s.

Ramsey, "'Cos getting together on different continents every six months or so wasn't really viable, and I s'pose our hearts weren't really in it. By 1992, Stevie was living in Germany. And we did one last German tour. He was jamming with a German bassist and drummer and taught 'em a bunch of our songs. I went over, we spent a day rehearsing, then toured for a few weeks, and that was that really."

More so than just about anyone I've written about, Ramsey has kept his ideals close, continuing to help operate the anarchist book publisher and distro AK Press.

Ramsey, "The band was wonderful. I'm proud of the music we made. Actually, that sounds a little arrogant. I thoroughly enjoyed it, and still do. I guess we never really did it (musically) for anyone beyond ourselves. If other folks dug it, great, if they didn't, that's absolutely fine too. The scene introduced me to a load of wonderful folks, any of whom I'm still in contact with today.

"Politically, I think anarcho-punk was a real mixed bag. It undoubtedly politicized a generation or two. And loads of folks doing great work today came through anarcho-punk, and came to anarchism via punk. It definitely revolutionized all kinds of concepts, or at least, popularized them. Doing it yourself. Creating your own world—self-determination in all aspects of one's life.

"I think a lot of the politics propagated as anarcho-punk are/were really horrible. The line laid down by Crass was, at best, muddy DIY liberalism. Astonishingly, for Britain (or perhaps not, given the composition of most of the members of Crass), they completely eschewed not only any class analysis, but turned anarchism into a series of almost drop-out single issues. To their credit, they were reflective, and were changing, and the contradictions of their politics and their realization that some of their absolutes didn't quite match up to reality, was a large part of causing them to implode.

"But getting young (largely working class) kids to become pacifist vegetarian ban-the-bombers is not a viable strategy for revolutionary change, let alone realistic local self-empowerment.

"I still love the music. I still get off on the power, the passion, the anger, the ideals. Personally, as I've gotten older, my commitment to anarchism and revolutionary change has only increased, and certainly my class antagonisms have expanded with my waistline. I currently sing in a folk band that does largely old political songs, and in many ways have come full circle nearly 30 years later. Practicing in our kitchens, with an acoustic guitar and voices. Except that unlike the punk scene, where I'm now typically the old weirdo standing at the back (or preferably sitting), in the folk scene, I'm often the young whippersnapper!"

Political Asylum

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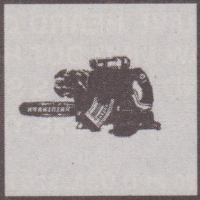

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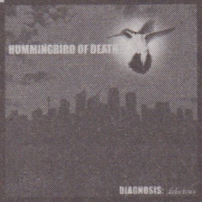

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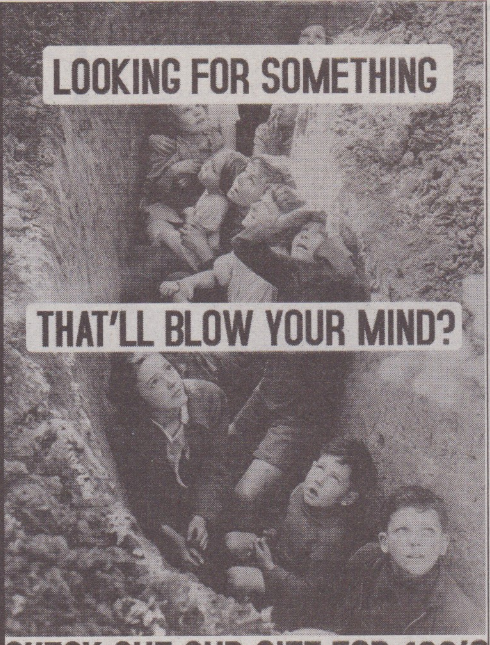

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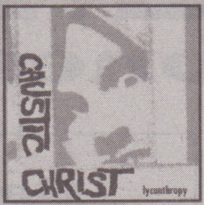

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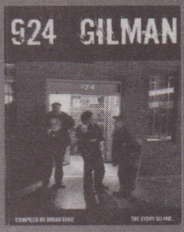

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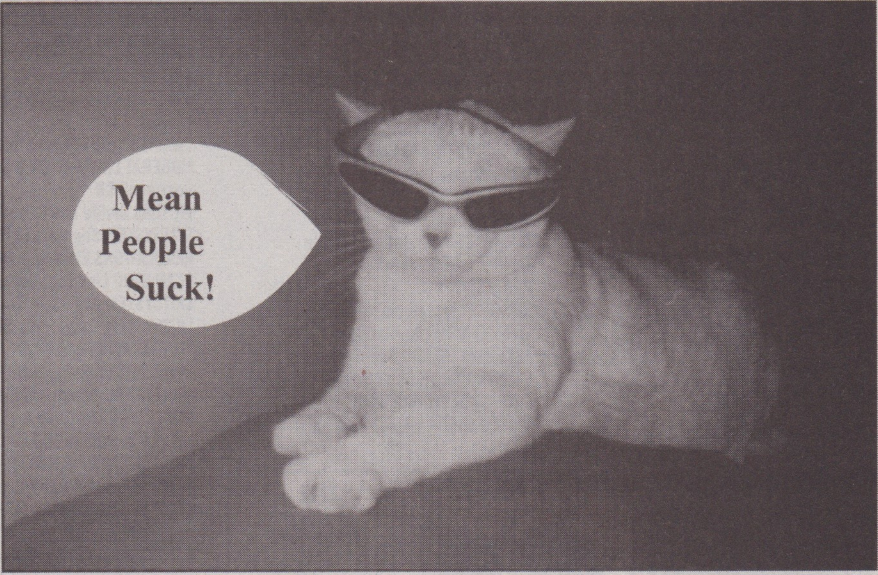

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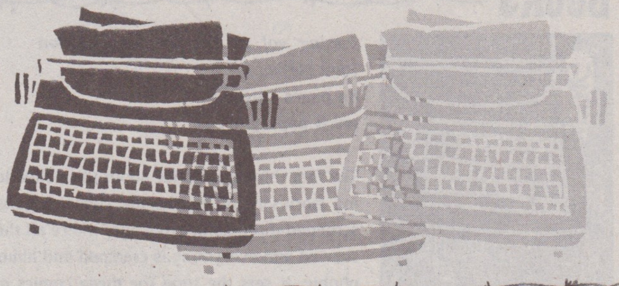
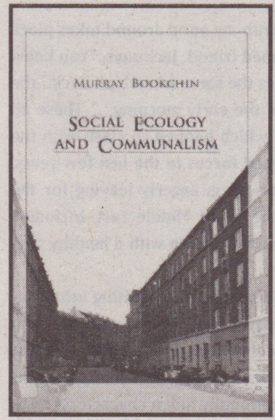


They Could Have Been Bigger Than EMI: A Discography of Now Defunct Independent Record Labels That Released Vinyl (Second Edition)
Joachim Gaertner
567 pages • $40.00
Pure Pop For Now People

Ah labels, the great independent music go-between, fans and musicians find each other through the arbiter of taste and scene—the hip record label. More than any other "gatekeepers" (zines, radio, etc.), labels, especially in the indie-'80s, made the band. If you weren't on a label that people had heard about, your climb to the top was that much more strenuous. If you found on your way onto a label, you were automatically pigeonholed into a sound and a scene, regardless of your actual sound or your scene. That all said, I definitely have often used labels to direct my music prospecting. As teenager that meant buying all the K and Teenbeat records I could find, and in general that approach worked. Maybe I missed out on other great music that was happening at the time, or wasn't able to appreciate the more historical aspects of rock 'n' roll, but it did give me more than enough CDs to track down and shows to go to with my limited funds and time. More importantly it gave me a sense of identity. I was someone who liked K Records. I have since moved on to a deeper and broader music appreciation but a band's or record's label is still an important marker of quality music. (One of my professed record dork collector goals is to track down Factory Records 1-100—real music releases only, no egg-timers or legal battles!)

That is all to introduce this compilation of defunct independent label discographies (who released vinyl). It is what it says; not much else included but lists of labels and the records they released. You'll know pretty quickly whether this is something you'll want to track down. If you're like me, you'll find this book very useful and interesting despite its lack of critical or historical content. It's a little on the high side for price, but it is pretty thorough and complete; I couldn't find any mis-entries for labels and a lot of obscure, small, DIY indie-labels are included. Because it doesn't include still running labels, some notable labels are not included (i.e. no Dischord or K or Teenbeat), but you'll find a lot of great small UK DIY labels included, even ones that primarily released tapes.

—Ben Howell



Social Ecology and Communalism
Murray Bookchin
118 pages • $12.95
AK Press
674-A 23rd St.
Oakland, CA 94612
www.akpress.org

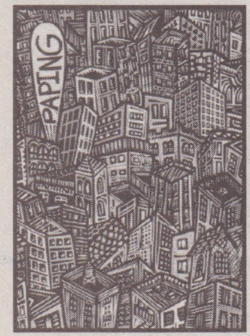
This slender volume contains, as the title would suggest, a sampling of well-known anarchist thinker Murray Bookchin's writings on social ecology and communalism. This book, like most anarchist writing, is rather vague and abstract, and ultimately brings us no closer to building a society free of exploitation and environmental catastrophe. I could write reams of pages about what I found problematic with Bookchin's ideas, but I'll keep it general and short. In the first essay, "What Is Social Ecology," Bookchin contends that what is generally thought of as natural and manmade is actually part of the same evolutionary process, and the distinction between the natural world and the world of humans is actually arbitrary. He argues instead that there is "first nature" (ecosystems and whatnot) and "second nature" (complex societies, culture and technology created by human beings) and the two things are not necessarily antagonistic. The problem arises when humans try to dominate nature, something that arises out the development of hierarchical societies. Therefore, the solution is to build a society that is free of hierarchies and exploitation and that can be characterized by radical direct democracy. This is probably the least contentious part of the book for me because I appreciate Bookchin's argument that there really is no concrete wall between humanity and nature. Also, I am always appreciative of those who polemicize against ecologists who see human society as inherently destructive. However, Bookchin downplays the role of capitalist production (general commodity production and production for production's sake) in engineering the current environmental crisis. He certainly acknowledges the fact that capitalist production is destroying the environment, but the fundamental problem, for Bookchin, is hierarchy and the resulting "idea of dominating nature." His essay is essentially idealist in the classical sense of the word, meaning that he focuses on ideas (e.g. ideas of domination of nature) as the explanation for social phenomena rather than material conditions (productive forces, he contends, are the symptom and not the disease).

The next two essays are very short, and they both develop the ideas of the first and foreshadow the arguments made in the last essay. Again, the arguments he makes are vague and abstract. He spends a good amount of time explaining what a movement to create a more just society should be, but does not come to this conclusions by analyzing social movements as they are, rendering his arguments divorced from the real world. He mostly makes vague references to ancient and pre-modern societies to make his point. What is particularly troubling is his view that smaller, de-centralized forms of power (that are radically democratic) are the solution, which to me amounts to arguing for a regression away from a more united humanity to a more divided one. We are left to take on faith that these new municipal forms of social organization are going to all get along just fine, again putting too much faith in the power of ideas alone to change society. He completely ignores class conflict as the fundamental aspect of human history (and its role in creating nastiness such as oppression and exploitation).

If I found the first few essays problematic, the last is by far the worst. Here Bookchin contends that if radicals do not transcend their outdated ideologies (Marxism, syndicalism, and anarchism) then humanity is doomed to wallow is misery. What is his alternative? The creation of a free and equitable society by forming radically democratic municipalities, where authentic politics replaces the politics of "statehood" and people become the active agents not as members of a class but as citizens. He comes to hold this view by contending that capitalism has developed in such a way that renders the struggles of working people against capital obsolete, even to the point of arguing that the working class is disappearing. A strange argument considering that the working class (as in people who sell their labor power for wages) of South Korea alone is larger than the *entire* proletariat in Marx's day. Instead of rehashing old ideologies, we are told to follow Bookchin's model for a reorganization of society that is utter utopianism. What makes many of the powerful leftist thinkers so impressive is that their theoretical insights were based on actual events which they analyzed using the dialectical materialist method. Marx did not say to the Parisian workers "elect your delegates directly with the right to recall at any time and pay them no more than the average wage"—the workers did this without him, which led Marx to be able to *concretely* articulate what he meant by the "dictatorship of the proletariat." Similarly, Lenin did not say to the workers "form councils of deputies that can challenge the authority of the capitalist state." It was only after the workers themselves did this that Lenin was able to *concretely* argue that the soviets were to be the form of the new workers' government. There is none of that in Bookchin's arguments, save vague references to ancient societies (as well as a few more contemporary ones). He makes no reference of Chile in 1973, Portugal of 1974-'75, Iran in 1979, or Poland in 1980, where the workers (those people that are no longer that important) challenged capitalist (or state-capitalist) rule. He seems to have mostly dreamed it up in his own head, making it entirely abstract and therefore entirely worthless. This is one for the dustbin of history.

—Robin Horne

BOOKS



Paping vol. 16: The Teacher's Edition
John Mejias
80 pages • $10.00
www.paping.org

The first thing you notice about this collection of teaching stories is, obviously, the cover. A gorgeous hand-screened three-color cityscape, where all the angles are skewed and everything is cramped and almost claustrophobic. It sets the tone for these comics quite nicely. John has made a compilation of some of his previous comics about teaching art in elementary schools in predominantly poorer areas of New York, which are bound to be eye-opening to some. The interior indicia lists the summary for library purposes as "Teacher Discovers Poor People Get Ripped Off At School," and that sums up a good chunk of this. The ridiculous bullshit he had to put up with just for attempting to teach kids that art isn't copying what the teacher tells you, to let them open up and *really* learn what art means to them, is astounding.

This is a project that is extremely personal, and you can tell. The expressive art style fits the book perfectly. Honestly, I wouldn't expect any less from someone who obviously cares about democratizing art, as well as breaking down the walls of ignorance in public education. The sequence of events involving painting murals on unused portions of the school alone will make you want to punch the next school administrator you meet. Reading this makes you really feel for what he's doing with this project, and, because of this, is something every potential faculty member should read to see what goes on with one of the teachers out there who really cares about making a difference—it's not easy.

There are numerous high points here, with my favorites being a rundown of what bands his young students like and don't like ("Don't play the Dickies if Akio tells you he hasn't taken his medication"—priceless.) as well as the sweet story about connecting with a learning-disabled student who couldn't fit in with what everyone around her was telling her to do/be through the simple glory of a swing-set. There are also a few guest sections, a comic made by a very young student coping with the loss of a beloved administrator/psychologist, a section done by the book designer detailing his travails as an unsuspecting Taiwanese student starting the third grade in Queens, and a story by a fellow teacher about seeing the home life of one of her students. These are also touching in their own ways, and I enjoyed them all.

Overall, this is a quality project that I suggest for everyone interested in the results based climate of current American education, as well as the fucked-up school dynamics that most adults forget. It is well made and pure intentioned. The only negative I can think of is that it is a compilation—I would really like to see what the original issues looked like (screen printed on wallpaper samples? Great idea!), as I personally love the short-run, handmade zines/comics of this ilk. Move on this one, there's only a thousand, hand-numbered.

—Joe Soares

Nina
Blag Dahlia
111 pages • $9.95
Scapegoat Publishing
www.scapegoatpublishing.com

Wow! Blag Dahlia really pushes the envelope with his new book! Imagine, a book about a teenage girl who is...a sociopath! If this was 1980, I might be impressed.

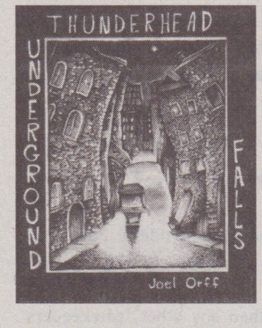
Maybe it's a generational thing—the band that would become the Dwarves formed when I was 6—but I'm just not shocked very much by this sort of thing. I mean, the idea of writing a book about a teenage girl who doesn't know what right and wrong are, who has sex and steals things and whatever, is fine...but holy shit, every chapter is exactly the fucking same. Here's the formula: Nina goes somewhere and either A) Has sex with somebody way older, way younger, or (gasp!) a girl, B) Somebody gets hurt, dies, or gets fired because of her, or C) Both, and then the chapter is summed up merrily with a paragraph that has little or nothing to do with the story.

(In all fairness, *Nina* could be interpreted as being feminist—although I'm not sold on that being the actual intent of the author. Nina is a young girl who is desirable to many people who try to control her through her sexuality, but in each encounter Nina ends up being the person with the upper hand—you know, 'cuz she's a crazy person who doesn't give a fuck, and the adults end up getting damaged because she has the power. I'd be hard-pressed to tell you that's what I thought Dahlia's aim was, though.)

The only shocking things that I found while reading the book were the extreme lack of character development, and the fact that in the author blurb, Dahlia claims that he lives in San Francisco and "doesn't do a damn thing." Puh-leeze.

I *do* think that it's possible to write a book that shares the same aim as *Nina* does—to shock and provoke—and to actually have it be *good*, even in the atmosphere we live in today where stories of teenagers (girls) gone bad are *de rigueur*. So, I would suggest that you go and find one of those books to read, instead of wasting your cash on this yawnfest.

—Thera Webb



Thunderhead Underground Falls
Joel Orff
128 pages • $14.95
Alternative Comics
503 NW 37th Ave.
Gainsville, FL 32609-2204
www.indyworld.com/altcomics

Via Alternative Comics, Joel Orff has released his new graphic novel *Thunderhead Underground Falls.* With intentionally jagged illustrations, Orff carves out a story of a young man driving full-speed into the pressures and consequences of becoming an adult. The story's protagonist, Jack Martin, is reveling in a final adventure with a female companion who is trying to convince him to desert the Army, which is about to send him to the Middle East. In a boxy off-road vehicle, Jack and his friend escape further into the snowy west, temporarily running from his future. A blizzard serenely wraps the two of them in a peace that Jack often compares to the violent world he is about to enter. At times, the only tension more intense than Jack's reserve duty is the palpable yet futile friendship with his female acquaintance. Spliced with visions of his future and thoughts of his past, the storyline illustrates the complicated mind of a man overwhelmed with a huge decision and its costs.

Orff stays true to the DIY style of simple black and white drawings that are a little rough on the edges; very similar to the string of comics that were popular in the zine world of the late-'90s such as *King Cat* (who I was not surprised to see linked on Orff's website). Most of the illustrations are simple and interesting but a few pages seemed rushed and unnecessarily sloppy. If computer-style pixilated-shading doesn't contradict the jagged aesthetic then I don't think mixing in a pen with a finer point should be out of the question; in fact, I think it's the major thing this piece is missing. However, Orff's drawing style is appealing and proves that you don't have to be Frank Miller to put out a visually charming graphic novel.

Thunderhead Underground Falls demonstrates Orff's ability to develop a compelling story. Though it was a little cheesy, I found sympathy with the characters in the narrative and their hopeless romanticism. While I can't relate to all of Jack's choices, his strong emotional decisions and struggles with his own contradictions have a universal appeal. I would never join the US Armed Forces, making it easy for me to hope that Jack would desert, so when his friend pleads with him to not go (reminding him that they are outsider and misfits who are not a part of what the war is about) I wondered what other reason he needs to stay. Jack is that kid who you desperately need to give a great punk mix tape before someone else starts giving him weed and tickets to Korn's "Family Values" tour.

One point in the story that was difficult for me to wrap my mind around takes place in a late night conversation between Jack and his unnamed friend. Jack says, "You know what I'm afraid of most? I'm afraid that I won't see things the same when I get back...the sound of the train...the smell of spring...the feeling of the early morning..." These all seemed like intelligent well-reasoned concerns, all of which happen to clash with the thought process of everyone I know going into the armed forces in the last few years. This emo-esque anxiety doesn't fit with my coworker who is eagerly leaving for the Marines in a month and can't wait to shoot "everything in the Middle East, including kids," as he puts it. My bias aside, I suppose it's possible for people with a healthy cognitive process to go into the Army.

The entire tale seems to take place over one evening, constantly drifting into footnotes of Jack's past and thoughts of the future. A few pages leave you wondering what exactly becomes of Jack, and the plot leaves a few compelling loose ends. Orff has proven talent as a storyteller. I hope he continues to develop his skills and polish his style. This is a great example of an indie comic with emotionally laden characters (think Nate Powell if he was less punk and drew like the guy who made *Dr. Katz*). Check his website for this and other works.

—Lowell Fletcher

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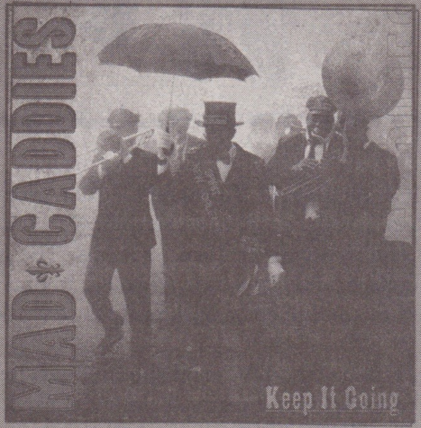

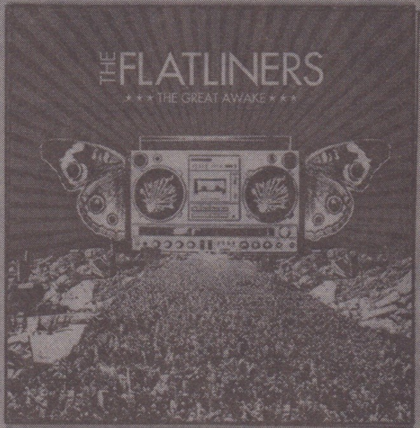

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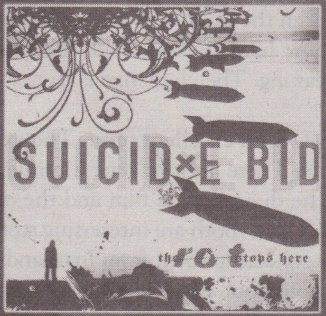

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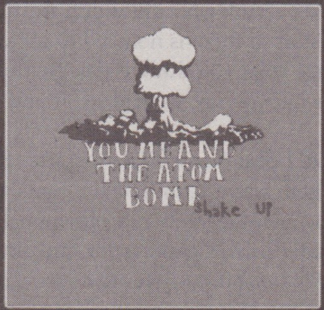

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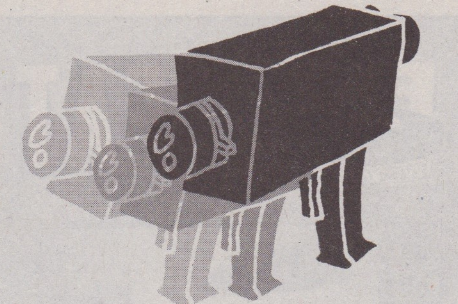


BRING ME THE HEAD OF GENE SISKEL

CAROLYN KEDDY

I'M SHIFTLESS WHEN I'M IDLE

Everyone thinks her/his scene is the best. I know I do. You wouldn't be involved in or nostalgic about it if you didn't think something truly extraordinary and satisfying was happening. I believe that amazing bands are playing in different areas of this country and around the world that I will never hear of, no matter how hard I try. It is this attitude that has kept me interested in music for so long.

Towncraft: Notes From A Local Scene is the story of a small town punk scene. This one is located in Little Rock, Arkansas. You may have heard of some bands from that city: Econochrist or Trusty. However you would probably think of them as being from Oakland and DC respectively. "Little Rock music is far better than almost anywhere else I've been" is bluntly stated at the beginning of the film and I am ready to be impressed.

There may not be many famous bands from Little Rock, but the kids there are ambitious. There wasn't a record store in town so 16-year-old Burt decided to open one, Long Arm Records. He had trouble with landlords and could only keep the store open from 4 to 6 p.m., after school and before dinner, but he did it. When the punk club closed down, the punks started having free shows in the park. This scenario seems like it could be applied to almost all punk scenes. **Towncraft** plays up the angle that all the kids in their scene are teenagers.

The challenge for any punk documentary is to celebrate the subject matter while getting others to appreciate it as well. Where most seem to go wrong is in the need to explain to non-punks the punk attitude and what was happening. In most cases it is a punk, former punk, or someone who is just interested in punk who will watch the film. She or he will already know all this stuff so there is no need to include it. Yet, all films do. Show the audience what you think is great without feeling the need to justify it. If it is what you say, we will see it and it enjoy it as much as you do.

Towncraft: Notes From A Local Scene looks at Little Rock punk from 1986 to the present. There was a club that has punk bands, but most of the people in this documentary were not old enough to get in to see any of them. They hang in the parking lot and listen to the music. They read *Maximum Rocknroll* from cover to cover. Then an all-ages club the DMZ opens and the kids start forming bands. They start releasing records and form a collective record label. The latter starts as the most impressive idea. A person runs the label for a few months, then passes it on to the next person and so on. Of course, one person eventually runs the label; but that starting concept is too cool.

The most disconcerting thing about **Towncraft** is that everyone talks about how Little Rock has the greatest scene ever, yet everyone leaves to go somewhere else. Most never seem to return. The band members grow up, go to college, and move to bigger cities to find success. The ones that do return seem to come back ready to settle down and start a family.

The booklet that accompanies the DVD and the film website are excellent at telling a more in-depth and personal history of the Little Rock scene. **Towncraft** the film should have gone for more of that style. The timeline of the film seems to be inconsistent with that of the website. The booklet tells two stories I would have like to seen more in the film: the formation of a warehouse show space at State Street and the punk show at the Governor's mansion. (www.towncraftmovie.com)

I have seen **Un Chien Andalou** many times. It is a film that completely changed my view of filmmaking from the first time I saw it. I will go as far as to blame it for my present attitude toward mainstream film. I love this film. If you haven't seen it, what are you waiting for? It's out on DVD.

Un Chien Andalou is a short surrealist film made by Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dali in 1929. Buñuel repeatedly stated, and it is even mentioned by his son Juan-Luis in an interview included on this DVD, that no aspect of the film symbolizes anything. Of course, every time I see it I think that I am figuring out the meaning. Then I remember what Buñuel said. It may have been the intention to have no meaning, but I suspect that no matter how hard Buñuel tried, subconsciously everything in the film has a meaning. The challenge is to not see any meaning.

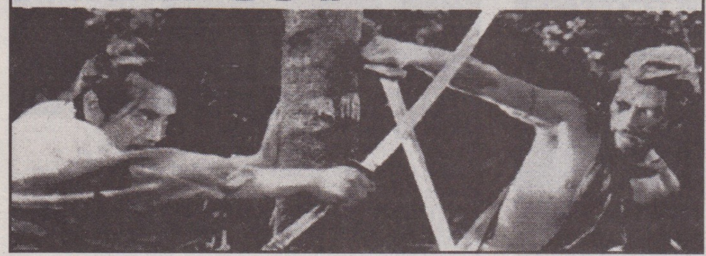
The **Un Chien Andalou** DVD is an excellent print. The extras are unfortunately not too substantial. There are two brief interviews with Buñuel's son Juan-Luis. In one he discusses the film and the other he discusses Buñuel's falling out with Dali. Both are interesting stories, but it seems that Juan-Luis is not recollecting them from firsthand experience. He even admits at one point not remembering living in New York because he was too young. The film commentary track is done by "Surrealism Expert" Stephen Barber who rambles on about the general history of surrealism, ultimately not really enlightening me too much.

In the end you just want the DVD for the film anyway. It's a great thing to have constant access to. (www.transfluxfilms.com)

In the last few weeks we have lost four people whose work I have enjoyed immensely. I am very sad to say farewell to Michelangelo Antonioni, Ingmar Bergman, Tom Snyder, and Tony Wilson. As a tribute I watched (and you should too) **Il Grido** (starring Steve Cochran!), **The Seventh Seal** (play chess with the grim reaper), Public Image Ltd. on the **Tomorrow Show** (Lydon is caught off guard when Snyder doesn't want to talk about the Sex Pistols) and the **Twenty-Four Hour Party People** extras (Wilson pointing out all the falsehoods in the movie).

I am always looking for films to review. If you made one, send a copy to Carolyn Keddy, PO Box 460402, San Francisco, CA 94146-0402. If your film is playing in the San Francisco Bay Area, let me know at carolyn@maximumrocknroll.com. I will go see it.

FINAL CUT BY STEVEN SPINALI



MIDLAND'S BURNING

At least for its first half, **This Is England** comes off as a mostly good-spirited glimpse at the British skinhead scene circa 1983. Something has to be said about even broaching the subject in a significant film.

Shaun (Thomas Turgoose) is maybe 15, an unusually thick-headed kid whose unfashionable mid-'70s look (bellbottoms, rayon) might some day make him a prime candidate for "What Not to Wear," "worst of" edition. Judging from his friends, he doesn't have any. So he's a good match for the undesirables from under the bridge—a cadre of mostly clueless skinheads who had already learned the lesson from their punk elders that there's no future…and no reason to worry about it.

The East Midlands is far from the pulse of London; it's more like a place England forgot to restore after the V2 rockets did their damage. The mix of crumbling streets and shabby flats gives their world a starkly utilitarian look. A Pakistani-run newsstand mostly escapes the squalor, but the proprietor isn't interested in having Shaun pilfer his comics. One word about the police, and Shaun is out on the street again.

His redemption, of sorts, comes when he gains the trust of Woody (Joe Gilgun), a lanky, quick-witted skin who has unofficially risen to the top rung of a local skinhead group. Woody is mostly into harmless fun, and he devises a strategy to lift Shaun's ever-low spirits. Dressing in outlandish costumes that wouldn't fool anybody, they do the neighborhood some good by smashing windows in condemned buildings. (At least we assume they're condemned; every place would profit from some kind of urban renewal.)

Hoping to upgrade his social position with the skins, Shaun glares at an authoritative-looking set of jackboots in a shop window. Shaun's mother pushes a pair of respectable shoes "from London"—even though they're only nominally British. Shaun, a virtuoso whiner, refuses to fall into the adults' trap.

This Is England comes perilously close to committing the sin of sentimentality, a fault that has crushed films less able than this one. Director Shane Meadows isn't as merciless with his characters as Mike Leigh, but hopes of a hard-edged political context emerges in the second half. The payoff is so nerve-wracking and mesmerizing that you resent it taking so long. After enduring Shaun's love interest with a Siouxsie throwaway four years his elder (and a foot taller), a more potent reality emerges from the plot.

Fresh from prison, Combo (Stephen Graham) is a little older, and quite a bit more intense than the rest of the group. Charismatic and given to speeches, his presence immediately cuts a schism between the members. Woody departs with a small core of buddies. Combo challenges the only black member by asking whether he's British or "Jamaican"—despite the fact that Two-Tone is the soundtrack of their lives. For the first time, we hear punk in the background—the UK Subs—though everyone can be relieved that nobody there knows about Skrewdriver yet. Combo is obsessed with notions that Britain is controlled by foreigners, so skins can't get a job (though no-one seems interested in the prospect). He's particularly incensed that English citizens must die for Margaret Thatcher's decision to invade the Falklands.

Informed punks may be interested by this plot element in particular. As some may recall, Britain's actions were famously protested by Crass, who quickly lambasted the conflict on vinyl and elsewhere. But while progressives disdained the war for any number of humanistic reasons, others—mostly the reactionaries—wanted nothing to do with "foreigners" in the first place.

The film is unambiguous about its own point of view. At the start of the film, Shaun is a stranger in his own country. But when the Pakistani store owner tries to eject Shaun a second time, he involves Combo and his hooligans. Shaun has a chance to regain the appearances of British control (in this case, loads of purloined candy), while the store owner meets a more violent end. It's one of the most chilling sequences, Shaun cackles like a baby—joins Combo in the ruin.

As the fledgling skin, Turgoose's performance is so note-perfect that he seems real even when his character is annoying and pathetic. Stephen Graham adds even more gravity as the skinhead who transforms the group; he is, by turns, agreeable or menacing. The background star is the music; while sometimes the tracks can be predictable, they're an effective backdrop convey place and time.

Director Meadows photographs his world to seem palpably "no-future." England is in a state of decline, and the only power it can manage is against an ill-prepared Latin-American government. The film collage that plays over the opening credits turns sadly ironic by films end: the screen is a-flood with familiar and mostly nostalgic snippets, almost a greatest hits from the daily news, and a potent reminder of the summer of '83—a peak of British punk music.

The Day the Country Died is a documentary that seems less definitive than Ian Glasner's book. And while many bands are doubtless familiar, this gives equal credit to more obscure outfits. Shot on digital video, the film tries to capture a spirit of originality and novelty. Voices range from the ever-exasperated Steve Ignorant to the philosophical, long-haired Penny Rimbaud. Everyone seems to have an individual sense of the personalities and events—which is what you'd hope, and expect.

In one interview, Killing Joke is named as having a singular stage show; neither Crass nor its label-mates have much of a chance to show off much comparable panache. In one section of the film, we get a chance to see and hear a kind of audio slide show of the Crass-related bands; it would have been better if the film conveyed the spirit of excitement more palpably. Director Roy Wallace (from Toxic Waste) has the background and cred for the topic, but there's the hope the filmmaking might better live up to the material.

The Day the Country Died is story potentially arresting even for a naïve audience. All the elements are there—but other dramatic moments in Crass' history are scarcely touched. The need for more hard material is underlined by the temptation for video collages, which are rather too frequent for their own good. And especially after seeing an electrifying documentary like Paul Ranchman's superb **American Hardcore**, British punk seems less than compelling. Now would be the time to remedy this problem—and show how remarkable the times and personalities really are.

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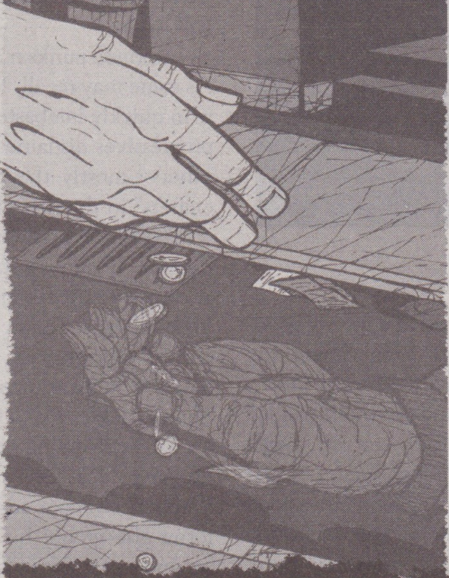

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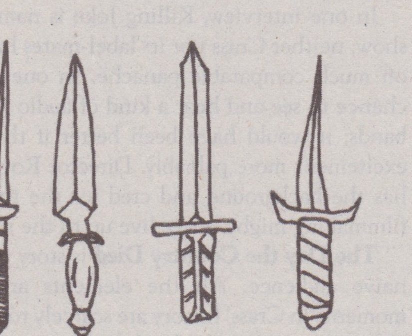

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THE 13TH VICTIM – "Broken Bottles and Razor Blades" CD

Four to the floor, no nonsense, rocked out hardcore with a slight sleaze value thrown in for good measure. A overwhelming Southern California feel, bringing to mind a faster U.S. BOMBS, stripy T-shirts, too many wasted days down the tattoo parlor, and hours perfecting the cool. Maybe this here cat is just too unhip to get it. (SD)
(King Fing, www.13thvictim.com)

A FASHIONABLE DISEASE – "Veal Medallions" EP

Keyboards and horns with blast-beats; everyone has a limit. This sounds like crap. From the cryptic stick figure drawing of a car pulling into Santa Cruz off Highway 17 and getting a peace sign flashed at them (?) to the fucking lame "trippy" cover art, this comes off as bullshit "music as art." Kick rocks. (NE)
(My Pet Goat, no address)

AHEAD TO THE SEA – "Treffer Versenkt" CD

This German outfit proudly proclaim themselves to be punk-folk. They're certainly incredibly impressive, probably closer to FLOGGING MOLLY or the POGUES (if you cut out all the Celtic influences/styles). Perhaps a more rock version of FAIRPORT CONVENTION with "punk" lyrics. What I'm trying to say is that they use electric folk instrumentation (electric guitar and bass and rock drum kit, together with fiddle, accordion, and a flute, plus excellent male and female vocals), with a strong political sensibility in the lyrics and a variety of styles—rock, reggae, traditional folk—performed incredibly well. I'm still not making this sound too appealing, I suspect, but they're really good. Superb vocals, excellent arrangements, and an impressive melding of the genres of music. Most of the songs are sung in English (with a few in German, and occasionally French and Spanish!), though the lyrics all appear to have a paragraph of introduction to 'em (in German). Really, really, good. Like the LEVELLERS at their best...or a more beefed up version of the current acoustic incarnation of CHUMBAWAMBA. Top stuff indeed. (RK)
(Wolverine, www.wolverine-records.de)

AKIMBO – "Navigating the Bronze" CD

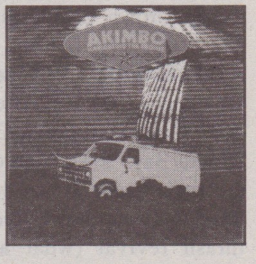
Big, bulldozer hard rock. The drumming will pummel you into the ground. This reminds me of mid-'90s Amphetamine Reptile bands and UNSANE. Not punk, hardcore, or metal, just heavy. At times they have a groove and even a Southern rock groove. Parts of "Wizard Van Wizard" remind me of AC/DC. "Huge Muscles" is a good title for the fourth track—it starts slow but then kicks in. I wasn't expecting much from this CD but it beat me into submission. However, while the drumming is one of my favorite parts of this CD—dude, a drum solo? (MH)
(Alternative Tentacles, www.alternativetentacles.com)

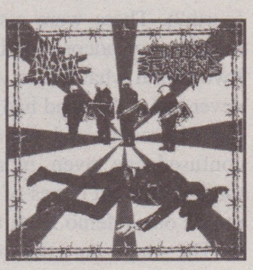
ANA BARATA / SPEEDER GARBEN – split EP

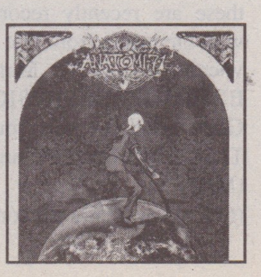
The ANA BARATA side starts off with a questionable riff that seems to halt the adrenaline once the pounding begins. After the slow start, they get the winds of war behind their sails and tear through five songs of a fairly cookie cutter but solid take on the modern Swedish crust/hardcore sound. Think SKITKIDS, SKITSYSTEM, VICTIMS, or HUMAN WASTE. In no way a bad thing! On the flip, Norway's SPEEDER GARBEN aren't too far away in their sound—slightly less crust and less "dynamic." Somewhat of a more straight-forward Scandanavian raging. Again, certainly not a bad thing! I am very pleased with this record and I feel both of these bands are gonna be something too look out for. Also, both SPEEDER GARBEN's and ANA BARATA's lyrics deal with topics I can get 100% behind—songs about cycles of domestic violence, being robbed of our free time and exploited as lesser machines in a world of fat men cumming in each others faces at the thought of working us to death, and how boring adult life is, among other pertinent things. On closer inspection, these songs were recorded in 2005! I'd like to hope these bands are still around. (JU)
(New Noise, Box 55, 83221 Froson, SWEDEN, www.skitsylen.tk)

ANATOMI-74 – "Mot Nya Hojder" CD

Scandinavian raw punk with some doom/stoner-influenced slow jams here and there, but otherwise ripping DISCHARGE-beat driven goodness with riff nods to classic Scandi-punk legends like AVSKUM, TOTALITÄR, ANTI-CIMEX, MOB 47. This isn't sub-par cookie-cutter crap (like what we've all come to expect…) and the musicianship and songs are spot-on, although given the choice I'd trade back some of those stoner riffs! Vinyl said to be available on Unrest Records soon. Excellent. (BS)
(Halvfabrikat, c/o D. Lonnqvist, Rimsmedsvagen 36 C, 393 52 Kalmar, SWEDEN)







ANGELWORM – "Ruin Your Scene" CD

The RANCID influence is all over the place here; maybe a little ANTI-FLAG too. Not bad and quite generic, but these guys seem young and one of them is wearing a RAMONES shirt so there are worse influences to have. The punky reggae is cool. Think maybe a premature RUTS. (RL)
(Triumph of Life, www.tolrecords.com)

A.N.S. – "The Process of Stoking Out" LP

The latest A.N.S. release captures their discordant punk with no less than three instrumentals—indicating the importance of extended song structures in their tunes. Lyrics to "All Torn Up" are almost a metaphor for their entire output, and despite their Texas origins, most of the tunes have a SoCal flavor. "Skate It Dry" is maybe the LP's sharpest and most ironic song. There's plenty to like here, but this veers away from standard three-chord tuneage; it demands a few spins before it sinks in. Strong, instrumentally focused production makes this effort surprisingly listenable. (SS)
(TXOS, 1119 Frame Street, Denton, TX 76209)

ARMED SUSPECTS – "Time Will Tell" CD

Maybe it's just me—I'm so spoiled by the genius of *Shock Troops* that I hold Oi!/street punk type bands to an impossibly high standard. Perhaps if this disc had the crazy raw production of bands like the ANGELIC UPSTARTS it'd have a heart, but unfortunately, it falls into that overproduced rut like so many bands of its ilk. If you're one of the eight people in the world that still owns a Zippo lighter and/or you have a kid, knock yourself out. (JP)
(Kings Crown, no address)

ATHRENODY – "Crazed Development" CD

Early '90s Bay Area death metal. Back then Redwood City, California, and other "South Bay" towns had one hell of a hardcore and metal scene. It was the breeding ground for what became power-violence and the first thrash revival (what are we on now, the fourth?). There were also a handful of death metal and grindcore bands. When I saw this CD I wondered what it was. A reissue of a release I never knew the band had? When I threw it in, I vaguely recognized some of the songs, which confused me even more. I started digging through my old boxes of junk and sure enough pulled out a demo from this band and threw it in. The songs were the same, sort of. Turns out these are recently recorded vocal tracks put with the music from that demo from 1993. The vocalist is Matt Harvey of EXHUMED/REPULSION/DEKAPITATOR. Good grindcore with touches of death metal. Think TERRORIZER and NAPALM DEATH. (MH)
(625, www.625thrash.com)

BAD SAMARITANS – "Re-gur-gi-tate" CD

Fast, thrashy, 21st century metallic hardcore. Precise and energetic, but with no real creativity to keep me interested. Then about half way through the record the band suddenly switches gears to a more garage-y, pop punk style. It's a bit disconcerting, but not enough. (CK)
(Nickel and Dime, PO Box 555712, Los Angeles, CA 90055, nickelanddimerecords.com)

LA BANDA TRAPERA DEL RIO – "Comics y Cigarillos/La Paja de Diego"

LA BANDA TRAPERA DEL RIO was a Catalan punk (or punkish rock, depending on how the distinctions are being split by people these days arguing about *those* days) band that was around from 1976-'82. These two songs that didn't make it on to the double-LP (otherwise) complete recordings of LA BANDA TRAPERA DEL RIO that Munster also put out, but not because they weren't up to snuff. "Comics y Cigarillos" (1980) shows their more rock side, while "La Paja de Diego" (1978) is pub rock gone berserk. Real good you betcha! (DD)
(Munster, www.munster-records.com)

BAR NICKELS – CD

Decidedly '80s-influenced punk rock from these Santa Cruz dudes. The music is in the SoCal skate-punk vein—think AGGRESSION—but the singer sounds a lot like Lee Ving of FEAR, which sounds odd when combined with some of their super positive, almost hippie-ish lyrics on songs like "War on Violence" and "Reeking with Positive." But that's all balanced out with more aggressive topic matter like "Backstab" and "Poser," and of course the obligatory songs about surfing and skating. The production is very DIY/digital sounding so it lacks a certain oomph, but they make up for it in attitude and sincerity. (PC)
(www.barnickels.com)

BASURA – "No Seas Lesbiana Mi Amor" EP

BASURA is one of the earliest, if not the first of punk bands coming out of Spain. This recording is originally from 1978; keep in mind the piece of shit Franco and his regime had barely ended by the end of 1975, just as punk was soon to hit and Spain was to experience a bit of freedom after a 36-year fascist dictatorship. This reissue is brought to us by the folks at Munster who have been bringing back some of the early Spanish punk and rock to the rest of the world. *No Seas Lesbiana Mi Amor* is much more rock than punk in sound, but the spirit, lyrics and attitude is definitely laced with some acidic humor. A must for fans of LA BANDA TRAPERA DEL RIO, KAKA DE LUXE, or even fans of early Pedro Almodóvar films. Check it out. (MS)
(Munster, www.munster-records.com)

BE BAD – "Vision Correction" CD

This sounds like the eternal, boring '90s math-rock art student support band. The guitar parts remind me of UNWOUND and the vocals are kind of Sonny Kay (VSS) styled, but I think maybe they are going for a BIRTHDAY PARTY/David Yow/AmRep thing?? I am not sure exactly. I am sure I would have been totally into it if it was 1995 right now, but I can't imagine wanting to listen to a fifth-rate UNWOUND clone at any point in the new future. But if I was still a high-water-wearing teenage girl I would probably heart this (hence the '95 reference). It seems that right now there is a total mid-'90s Amphetamine Reptile/Touch & Go/math-rock revival going on. Maybe all the new gen bands were teenagers when the JESUS LIZARD and DRIVE LIKE JEHU were playing or something. However, this band has the worst band name ever! BE BAD sounds like a BOYS II MEN-style '90s R'n'B act, like they should be touring malls. The art is kind of embarrassing too, like girls gone wild gone goth. Maybe they should tour with CLOCKCLEANER and SNAKE APARTMENT, hit the Midwestern food courts. (LG)
(Divorce, www.divorcerecords.ca)

BETWEEN THE WARS – "Death and the Sea" CD

A pretty damn metallic hardcore effort of the emo/HOT WATER MUSIC/IRON MAIDEN garden variety. Bearded chaps. Lots of chugga chugga. Some cool guitar flourishes. Shouted vocals about pain and loss and a bit of (left-wing) politics. With 17 tracks, it all starts to get a little much. But they do the genre with lots of enthusiasm, for sure. And I'm always a sucker for the twin guitar solos. (RK)
(Think Fast, www.thinkfastrecords.com)

BLANK DOGS – "The Doorbell Fire" EP

This is the third release by BLANK DOGS, following both a 12" and 7" and with three more releases already scheduled on separate labels. Busy, busy. With each new record the person/people behind the band create lo-fi twisted pop that is as mysterious as his/her/their identity. And honestly, who cares who or where the hell this band is from at this point? The three dirty synth-punk tracks on this EP are so catchy, it's going to be impossible to keep from humming them on the commute repeatedly for the next couple months. BLANK DOGS is making some fuzzy, distorted, dark electronic pop songs that sound like the perfect soundtrack to a dreamy yet somewhat evil KBD tinged '80s goth prom flick. (AL)
(Sweet Rot, PO Box 78025, Vancouver, BC, V5N-5W1, CANADA)

BOBBY JOE EBOLA AND THE CHLDREN MACNUGGITS – "¡Carmelita Sings!: Visions of a Rock Apocalypse" CD

A seriously endless (32 songs!) CD of all the classic BOBBY JOE hits. My personal favorite being "Skin Cancer" the chorus of which, "Everyone's got skin cancer, skin cancer, skin cancer," gets me angry stares when I sing it cheerily on BART. Musically it has more in common with a demented teenage musical than any punk band I can throw out, but the sarcastic scrutiny they use to look at the world is more harsh and funny and punk than any other band I can think of. You'll laugh, you'll cry, you'll cringe, but remember "Just because [they're] funny doesn't mean [they're] not serious!" Seriously awesome. (AA)
(Thrillhouse, PO Box 460207, San Francisco, CA 94146, www.thrillhouserecords.com)

THE BOLD AND THE BEAUTIFUL / TUNGUSKA – split LP

THE BOLD AND THE BEAUTIFUL are veteran Polish punks, some used to be in the band ANTICHRIST. Their songs rip! Fast, short, without falling into thrash clichés. There are a few power-violence moments but really it's just raging fast hardcore. They end their side with a cover of BLACK FLAG's "Six Pack." The liner notes for the TUNGUSKA side imply that some of the members live in Poland and some live in Ireland. Their side is slower, bigger, and more melodic. Reminds me of FROM ASHES ARISE a bit. Heavy, slightly crusty, with emo leanings. Good stuff from both bands. (MH)
(Trujaca Fala, PO Box 13, 81 806 Sopot 6, POLAND, www.trujacafala.com)

BOLDTYPE – CD

Wannabe FACE TO FACE snooze-fest from this Denver band who A) thank the soldiers (could mean their fans but who knows), and B) have a link on their MySpace page to their sponsor Monster Energy Drinks. In my humble opinion, sponsors aren't very punk. Fuck this band. (JU)
(no address)

BOSSY / DIRTY LOOKS – split EP

BOSSY is a pop punk band that is arguably more indie-pop than punk. Jangly riffs and simple beats with charmingly off-key female vocals and silly, lovey-dovey lyrics like "Who loves you more than the doorknob on your door?" …and then…DIRTY LOOKS! Hell yeah! Great pop punk in the vein of—but better than—and, yes, featuring members of—BENT OUTTA SHAPE. Vocalist Gaylen (ex-BEER GARDEN, CRYBABY MACARTHUR) is at her best on these two songs—one upbeat but melancholy, slightly angry, and hella catchy whoa-oh song; and one slower, more rhythmic tune where the vocals are shared with guitar virtuoso Naters. Yes, I said "virtuoso." Just listen to this shit—the dude is a genius: like HÜSKER DÜ meets…fuckin'…SIX PACK FOUR! The rhythm section rules too. Top ten. (PC)
(Salinas, PO Box 20996, Ferndale, MI 48220)

BRAT PACK – "Spending Money" EP

Caution! The BRAT PACK's vile punk rock will infect your open wounds! These basement cretins show you pantywaists how to rock your liver! The nasty rock 'n' roll served up on the *Spending Money* EP will remind you alcoholics of the CANDY SNATCHERS on a three-day booze and methedrine binge. This shit has the unhealthy garage feel of the DEVIL DOGS laced with the diseased blood of the RANDUMBS. The BRAT PACK plays damn decent rock and roll on this EP. Their lyrics deal with the loss of constitutional freedoms, government brainwashing of youth in school, and the futility of being an expatriate. The BRAT PACK music would better lend itself to a celebration of cold beer and women. If you want politics, go listen to a PISSCHRIST record! If you like dirty rock 'n' roll, go see the BRAT PACK when they play your town. (BR)
(Mispelled Youth, www.brtpck.com)

BROADWAY CALLS – CD

This Oregon band kicks pop punk ass! Similar to early TAKING BACK SUNDAY, JIMMY EAT WORLD, and GET UP KIDS with a punk edge. Very tuneful catchy stuff with a great mix of tempos and drum beats. Certainly a new band to keep an eye on; based on this release that is sure to make my annual top ten. (RL)
(State of Mind, www.stateofmindrecordings.com)

BURNING TIMES – "Nuclear Family War" EP

I am not sure where this band is from but BURNING TIMES have a rapid-paced hardcore drumming style accompanied by heavy guitars with dark and melodic bits. The vocalist has a powerful set of lungs and he belts these tracks out in way that makes the listener believe what he is saying. Urgent sounding and well thought-out lyrics make this a cool listen. (MS)
(Tadpole, spudutat@hotmail.com)

CALIFORNIA REDEMPTION – "Do Not Resuscitate" EP

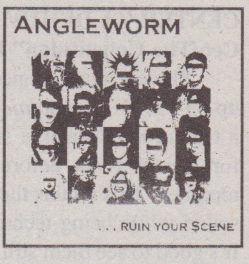
Tough guy mosh-core from SoCal. The guitar riffs are actually on the mid-tempo, melodic side—DAG NASTY comes to mind—but the vocals are more yelled than sung, and the occasional breakdowns/chanted back-ups are right out of the straightedge *hawd caw* playbook (although they don't seem to be a straightedge band per se). So, nothing groundbreaking here but these guys do what they do well. (PC)
(Deadlamb, 27 Town House, Shannon Weir, Athlone, Co. Westmeath, IRELAND)

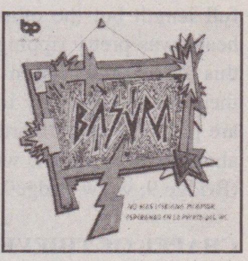
CATHOLIC BOYS – "Dead Ball" EP

Reverb-drenched, trashy, trashed-out garage rock—just the way I like it. Frantic and chaotic, but maintaining a catchy melody. I thought these guys had called it quits so I am *very* glad to hear some new songs. One of the best singles I have heard this year. (CK)
(Trick Knee, trickknee@hotmail.com)

CATHOLIC BOYS – "Fixed" EP

Awwww, they finally hit puberty! Like their bros THE FEELERS, the 'BOYS fuck you all up with 100-second noise blasts that somehow contain 14 bridges per song. The LP was OK, but this li'l four-songer dominates it. A truly terrible mess, but a focused truly horrible mess. There's even some sing-along anthemic parts the family can enjoy! (JP)
(Sweet Rot, PO Box 78025, Vancouver, BC, V5N 5W1, CANADA)





CENTER ZA DEHUMANIZACIJO – "Prvi Cen/The Constituion" LP

Slovene punk pioneers CZD finally follow up on 1995's *Ajajajajajajajaja* LP, which doesn't seem unreasonable since they were around for eleven years before getting that first LP recorded. This retains the charming, kind of thin sound while being technically better produced. It's good to see them still at it, though many will probably find the new songs a bit slow-paced and tipped a little heavily toward rock riffs. How about a reissue of the first LP? (DD)
(Front Rock, PO Box 48, 2000 Maribor, SLOVENIA, subazil@hotmail.com)

CEREMONY – "Scared People" EP

CEREMONY are a truly unique band. They seem to have no peers. Slow-ish dirgy songs that seem to end right at the point where you feel like they are about to blow the doors off, interspersed with fast, unique, power-violence styled rippers. Haven't heard their last full length but the other 7"er of theirs that I heard was pretty ripping too. I highly endorse this record! I ain't seen 'em live yet but I hear their shows are pretty intense too. These folks are part of a crazy North Bay scene that's just about to take over the world. (JU)
(Bridge 9, www.bridge9.com)

CHAPEL OF THIEVES – "Haunted Heart" CD

Although they look more punk, this band reminds me of EVANESCENSE, which is a bad thing. I also hear the mighty GWEN in the vocals. Goth look, keyboards, a girl singing, and guitar riffs. Maybe they are going after a more post punk thing but this isn't doing it for me and I can be down with the goths when I wanna be. (RL)
(www.chapelofthieves.com)

CHEVEAU / TYVEK – split EP

CHEVEAU are from Paris and they have an insane, down-the-wormhole sound like the ELECTRIC EELS or maybe THE URINALS. Totally disconcerting sounding rather than cosily Killed By Death retro. It's really fucking creepy and feels like something is wrong with the record, like being on a really cheap ghost train ride that is scary because of a feeling of sketchiness unrelated to the fake-looking ghosts peeling off the walls. I think TYVEK are a cult band already, from Detroit, suitably nasal vocals over super treble guitars. There are a million hip *Messthetics* references and if that makes sense to you, you should get this because like most things on S-S Records it's a killer sound. (LG)
(S-S, 1114 21st Street, Sacramento, CA 95814)

THE CLEAN-CUTS – "Lollipop / I'm Gay"

If you're one of those folks that like bands that can only be described as having been influenced by the RAMONES, then this is a record for you. I am one of those people, by the way. This one does go a bit beyond that, but not much further. Somehow, this is distinctly European and kind of reminds me of the power-pop/punk stuff that was coming out of Germany in the mid-1980s. (KK)
(Weatown, c/o V. Guidicelli, 17 rue Notre Dame, 42000 Ste. Etienne, FRANCE)

THE COATHANGERS – CD

This is what happens when riot grrl collides with some art kid party crew and honestly the outcome is as boring as that idea sounds. These four Atlanta ladies have songs with singalong chants pulled straight out of a LE TIGRE album or something from a few years back, and they obviously have fun doing it, but what else? Not much. The songs range from punk party barebones rock tracks to emotive singer/songwriter crooners, and while I can get behind the idea of these ladies jamming, having fun doing it, and just not giving a fuck (which I do thoroughly endorse) this album creeps up and gets on the last nerve. (AL)
(Rob's House, www.robshouserecords.com)

COBRA SKULLS – "Sitting Army" CD

Holy crap, where the fuck did this come from? I was stunned by how good this is—it sounds like someone cross-bred the MISFITS and the LILLINGTONS. Hailing from Reno, Nevada, this three-piece floored me. Absolutely top-notch singing and songwriting and very intelligently written lyrics make this just about the best thing I've reviewed for some time. At the times when they speed up the tempo it would remind you of older melodic California punk, like BAD RELIGON and PENNYWISE, but tough too...like maybe SMOGTOWN. They have a very original sound, there's a definite rockabilly influence, and that doesn't even bug me, it just adds to the sound. They have a couple of songs in Spanish (which I always like) and an acoustic political ballad that's not cheesy. In fact it's a great song. Like I said, the lyrics really are a cut above the rest—well thought-out, political without being sloganeering, with topics including urban sprawl, religion, the punk scene, and of course the war. This album's awesome. I have to say, I've been listening to punk for almost twenty-five years, and "Faith Is a Cobra" is one of the best songs I've ever heard...I can't recommend this highly enough. (AD)
(Red Scare, www.redscare.net)

COCONUT COOLOUTS – "The Spinaround/Swim"

Wow. This is awesome! Wild, rollicking garage rock in a very punk rock way. Not only do these guys have a very cool name, but their songs are *so* catchy. This is just fun, fun, fun. I'll be listening to this all night. My favorite record of the month! (CK)
(Heads Up, coconutcoolouts@gmail.com)

COLA FREAKS – "Keder Mig" EP

Denmark punk.....fuck yeah, I'm diggin' it.....!!!!! This EP could have been recorded in '78....the song-writing style, the quirky guitar chops, the wind up drumming, the flat production, and even the faggy singing all reek of the "golden era" of punk....!!!!! Most current bands can't pull off this style very well....but that doesn't mean that there's not tons of 'em out there right now that are still trying for the ultra-'70s sound.......it just seems a little more natural for these COLA FREAKS for some reason...!!!! Take it from an old punk you motherfuckers......you just might like the taste of my cum!!!!!!! (SW)
(Hjernespind, PO Box 505, 2200 Copenhagen N, DENMARK, www.hjernespind.com)

THE CONDORS – "Wait For It" CD

My first thought was THE LEE HARVEY OSWALD BAND, but alas, it was a fleeting thought. Lounge meets college radio here; I'm guessing that these guys are all big REPLACEMENTS fans. OK, it gets a little punker later but it's...I don't know...too fuckin' EVERCLEAR for me. (AD)
(Rank Outsider, rankoutsiderrecords.com)

CRAWLERS – "Kill the Elephant" LP

Ho-lee shit, this one's a certified rager! Never heard of THE CRAWLERS before, but this six-track 12-inch is grabbing my attention real fast. You know that CHRIST ON A CRUTCH LP *Crime Pays When Pigs Die*? It's kinda an underrated classic, and these guys definitely have the same things going on here—driving no-nonsense hardcore with great, catchy riffs and a fucking pissed vocalist. They also know when to vary the tempos too, and have one of the rare talents of a truly great punk band—the ability to turn a non-punk song into a great cover (I won't spoil the surprise). For a more current reference, think maybe TALK IS POISON? Anyway, guess what—the first pressing is only 500 copies, so don't say I didn't warn ya... (CS)
(Blind Spot, PO Box 40064, Portland, OR 97240)

CULT OF SUE TODD – "Not…" CD

Four songs of lo-fi '90s-inspired indie rock; let's say THE PIXIES or FLAMING LIPS-ish, two bands I like but don't feel like hearing rehashed. You know that joke that people make when you are singing along to a song badly? You know, when they ask "Hey, who sings this song?" and you tell them "Dude, Siouxsie Sioux of course" and then they say "Let's keep it that way" and they laugh. Well, who plays this particular brand of '90s indie

sound? Let's keep it that way. (AA)
(www.sonicbids.com/cultofsuetodd)

CULT RITUAL – "Weak Body" EP

This 7-track EP will hit you like a sledgehammer and leave you bleeding, wanting more. This is pure rage and aggression in the vein of Dez-era BLACK FLAG with hints of RORSCHACH and BL'AST. The music ranges from fast, Ginn-like chaotic dissonance to slowed-down power surges. As I listened to this aural assault and saw that it was on Burrito Records, I was convinced for a second that Bob FAILURE FACE was singing! No, it's actually some disgruntled younger cat who is no doubt influenced by that notorious band. Both groups hail from the depressing swampland of Brandon, Florida, which helps to explain the total despair, regret, and anguish in the lyrics. This is the soundtrack for those disgusted with the world. In other words, this is fucking superb! (BG)
(Burrito, PO Box 3204, Brandon, FL 33509, www.soundideadistribution.com)

DAYGLO ABORTIONS – "Death Race 2000" LP

I do not know anything about this band but apparently they exist in a similar realm as SOD (un-PC dumb as dirt). This record is mediocre and probably not worthy of reissue. All the lyrics are super SoCal (except they are from Canada) bro-core party douche style about getting stoned with your bros and how your girlfriend is boning all yr friends and drinking on your dime. Boo hoo motherfucker. Maybe their older records are better but this is weak washed up rock music with a bad clip art cover. (LG)
(Unrest, Suite 239, 10654 82nd Ave, Edmonton, AB, T6E 2A7, CANADA, www.unrestrecords.com)

DAYGLO ABORTIONS – "Feed Us a Fetus" LP

This 1985 LP by these Canadian punks was well received in the day. In retrospect, the only reason you would listen to this would be if your DOA and SUBHUMANS CD's wouldn't play. Some of the records from the 1980s have stood the test of time. *Feed Us a Fetus*, however, is not one of them. Give "Fucked Up Ronnie" or "Slave to My Dick" a spin and you are suitably informed—you do not need this reissue. The reason is clear: the politics of the DAYGLO ABORTIONS in 1985 were on the money; 20 years on, the music of the DAYGLO ABORTIONS was forgettable! No need for maudlin nostalgia for bands from the '80s if there's no rock 'n' roll urgency, why bother with the reissue? This LP is painfully dated. You hippie punks don't need this. Purchase the new WOLFBRIGADE *Prey to the World* on Unrest Records instead. (BR)
(Unrest, Suite 239, 10654 82nd Ave, Edmonton, AB, T6E 2A7, CANADA, www.unrestrecords.com)

THE DAYGLO ABORTIONS – "Holy Shiite" LP

What the hell? A month or two ago I came to *MRR* and there was a pile of LP reissues from THE ACCÜSED, and now this month a whole pile of reissue LPs from THE DAYGLO ABORTIONS?? Guess what? Same record label. Around 1985 was when I discovered hardcore and punk, I borrowed a roommate's *entire* record collection and one of the LPs was from THE DAYGLO ABORTIONS. I dug the in-your-face obnoxiousness of it at the time. You know, this shit is stupid and that's OK by me. I don't hear as much metal as I remember, nor as much punk. This album came out in 2004? The first track is fucking horrible, but side two gets rolling with a few tracks that made me laugh. On "Is This How a Punk Song Goes?" they play in a style of contemporary punk and sarcastically asks the question "Is This How a Punk Song Goes?" Then on their song "Vince Neil" they go after MOTLEY CRÜE. This album didn't have the impact on me that one of their other releases did 20+ years ago but it also wasn't as bad as I thought it was going to be. I don't want to call them crossover but they were punk and metal combined. (MH)
(Unrest, Suite 239, 10654 82nd Ave, Edmonton, AB, T6E 2A7, CANADA, www.unrestrecords.com)

DAYGLOW ABORTIONS – "Out of the Womb" LP

Fans no longer have to pay 300 bux and up for this LP thanks to the folks at Unrest Records. This is the punk rock 12" these Canadian fucks originally released in 1981. I flashed back to old punk parties when most were 17 drunk and singing along to the whole damn record. The moment one sees the cover on this you know you will be dealing with some fucked up shit here and the DAYGLOs deliver. If you have not heard this band before, try to avoid buying all the other releases except for this and *Feed Us Fetus*. You will either love it or hate it. Listen and be your own judge. (MS)
(Unrest, Suite 239, 10654 82nd Ave, Edmonton, AB, T6E 2A7, CANADA, www.unrestrecords.com)

DEAR TONIGHT – "We're Not Men" CD

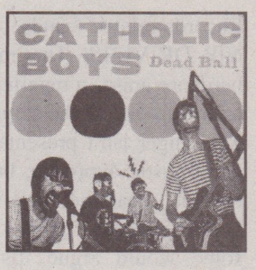
Overly earnest emo punk from Spin.com's latest heart-throbs. One small skip from MTV2/Warped Tour territory, these fellas have the INK AND DAGGER-style emo trappings mixed with the more radio friendly sounds of KID DYNAMITE or even HOT WATER MUSIC. The song writing and playing is on the money, but they are just trying so hard…I bet they even cry at sad films. (TB)
(Red Leader, www.redleaderrecords.com)

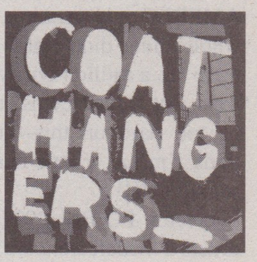
DEATH SENTENCE – "Until the End of the Sentence" CD

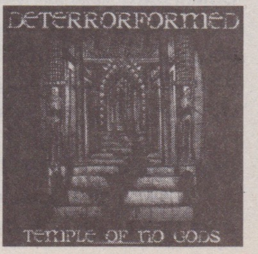
Smoking mid-'80s Australian thrashcore akin in blistering raucousness to bands like HERESY and RIPCORD. Easily worth picking up for the *Ryan, Thanks for the Support* EP and *If Pain Mends My Mind* tracks alone—great stuff here. But there's some seriously bru-fucking-tal songs from the unreleased recordings. "The Push," a straight-for-the-throat, knuckles-deep-in-your-eye-socket thrash assault, "Bitchin," and "Understand" from the *51st State of America* sessions blew me the hell away. Great booklet layout with photos, lyrics, and liner notes. (BS)
(Burrito, PO Box 3204, Brandon, FL 33509, www.soundideadistribution.com)

DESTROY L.A. – "Vandalize" EP

Since this was released by one of my favorite and most trusted labels, No Way Records, I had already bought it a few weeks before I even saw it in my review stack. In fact, I'd already listened to it a bunch and suggested it to a few people. So now I recommend it for you! Soundwise, DESTROY L.A. is reminiscent of the better Mystic







Records-related bands, chiefly RKL and the NIP DRIVERS. The music is pure teenage hardcore angst, a manifestation of uncontained animosity for all the stupid people in the world. This anger isn't presented in a knuckleheaded or nihilistic approach, but instead a frustrated cry of "what the fuck is wrong with everybody?" Because of this, despite the fact that some would argue it's generic, old school rehash (I wouldn't), it's still genuine. Pure, straight-ahead hardcore is timeless, so who cares if it's not the most original sounding, or "modern," or whatever. It's as real as it gets. I fucking dig it. (BG)
(No Way, 3211 Idlewood Avenue, Richmond, VA 23221, www.nowayrecords.com)

DETERRORFORMED – "Temple of No Gods" EP

Lo-fi, raw, slightly crusty hardcore from Portland, Oregon. The echo on the vocals makes this sound a bit old for some reason, like AMEBIX or something. For some reason this whole thing didn't grab me. I know, I know, there are a million crusty sounding bands these days, but it just seems second rate. I shouldn't be too hard on this—it has its moments—I think I'm just a little burnt out with the crusty sound. (MH)
(Defector, PO Box 3921, Portland, OR 97208, orders@thedefector.com)

DIRTY SOUTH REVOLUTIONARIES – "Queen City Underground" CD

The fact that a PR company wrote a one-sheet on which the band looks terribly uncomfortable/fake in their bandannas did not bode well for this CD. The whole thing sounds like a parody. One minute it sounds black metal, the next nu metal, the next political anthem hardcore, but has no real sound of it's own. Ugh, and do we need another song where the chorus is "Suck my dick"? This sucks. (MH)
(Tent City, www.tentcityrecords.com)

DISKELMÄ / DISTRESS – split EP

Finland's DISKELMÄ is somewhere in between DOOM and DEATHSIDE, with solos abounding over crunching lo-fi thrash and gruff barking vocals. A cool three-song rampage. Russia's DISTRESS is DISCHARGE/VARUKERS-style UK noise thrash with great choruses to their songs and to-the-point lyrics against child sexual exploitation, politicians, and pseudo-punks ("You're a slave to show business"!!!). Quick, burly split EP with a nicely rendered riff on *Great Punk Hits*/SKV for the cover illustration, but the pattern of bombs and TRAGEDY birds on the inside is laughable!!! (KS)
(Kamaset Levyt, www.punkinfinland/kamanen)

DØDSDØMD / DÖDSDÖMD – split EP

Last year I reviewed an EP on Havoc from these guys. I had never heard them before, and that record blew me away. First thing I noticed here was that everything pointed to this not being a self-titled release but a split, errr, with the same band on both sides. Or is it two different bands? Then I dropped the needle and heard ear-splitting, high pitched noise. I figured it was an intro and that the song would kick in any second. Nope. One side of this record is pure, grinding, metal-on-metal noise. It sounds like grinding factory machines. The other side has three tracks that are more like the DÖDSDÖMD stuff I've heard. Big, crusty-yet-melodic Swedish hardcore. This band has become one of my favorites. (MH)
(Wasted Sounds, www.wastedsounds.com)

DOUBLE DAGGER – "Ragged Rubble" CD

Well, as a three-piece conspicuously absent a guitarist, DOUBLE DAGGER out of Baltimore, MD sure is fucking aggressively noisy, which is interesting since they're most easily tagged a post-hardcore band. Most in that category thrive off a loud guitar and over-intellectualized, thoughtful, and often personally politicized and smugly witty (or is that ironically serious?) lyrics. They've sure got the lyrics part down. The guys in DOUBLE DAGGER also have some shtick about being graphic designers/typographers. Now, normally shticks are cheap gimmicks, but this time around it explains a lot. *Ragged Rubble* has a compartmentalized and neat sound, and even the feedback is well controlled and clean. It's a splattering of reserved anger designed thoughtfully with an artful lean. If you're looking for 1) Something that fills a hole BLACK EYES may possibly have left, or 2) An updated FUGAZI or something, DOUBLE DAGGER, who have been playing shows for five years or so with a messenger bag half full of releases, should do that with this album. It's nothing terribly new and/or outrageous but at least they've played with BOYZ II MEN. (AL)
(Stationary Heart, PO Box 220723, Chicago, IL 60622)

DUN BIN HAD – "21 Shots" EP

Mid-paced melodic angsty street punk with ska touches here and there. I can see the teenage mohawk circle pit with OP IVY and RANCID backpatches so clearly in my mind it's almost scary, pretty much what I expect to see at a local band night at Gilman. It's generic, but the songs are solidly written and I can see this band (or subsequent future bands) doing good stuff. Keep it up, punx. (AA)
(Jerk Off, myspace.com/dunbinhad)

THE ERGS! – "Blue/Blew"

THE ERGS! are way more than your standard pop-punk faceless tripe, rising above the RAMONES worship and failing SCREECHING WEASEL clones. There's heavy hints of early REPLACEMENTS, a more than a slight nod to HÜSKER DÜ and a wink and nudge of DECENDENTS. Track one takes all the three mentioned in its stride and throws out a nifty pop gem. Track two is a cover of NIRVANA; it sounds just like the original, which begs the question—why? A one-track winner. (SD)
(Toxic Pop, 2981 Falls Road, Baltimore, MD 21211, www.toxicpoprecords.com)

FALL OF EFRAFA – "Owsla" CD

Oh my fucking god. This band just takes themselves far too seriously. This is the first movement of a three-CD symphony based around the book *Watership Down*...yeah, the one about rabbits. Actually I remember really liking the animated film of that book when I was a wee boy. I can't recall picking up on the allegories to fascism in the cartoon or the book, but then again I was probably only eight or something. Long, drawn-out metalcore, with the addition of piano and cello for instant added epic-ness. I'm being a bit harsh, because it does actually sound good and the band are to be applauded for their ambition. I just can't get behind a triple album about rabbits. (AM)
(Halo of Flies, 930 E. Brady Street, Milwaukee, WI 53202)

FOUR EYES – "Five Songs" CD

They say this CD is five songs, but the truth is that it's six songs plus a whole live show as a seventh untitled track. The first six are typical FOUR EYES songs—poppy nerd punk not unlike fellow Sacramentonians THE BANANAS. All the songs are good, but my problem lies with the 30-minute live set tacked on at the end...where is the "Hat Nerd"?! For the uninitiated, "Hat Nerd" is one of the top ten songs ever written the history of rock 'n' roll! Seriously, I have gone to multiple weddings where it has been played over a dozen times at the reception. Fathers dance with their daughters to this for Pete's sake, and not to put this on the CD is just a shame and a tease. You three are assholes! (JF)
(Thrillhouse, PO Box 460207, San Francisco, CA 94146, www.thrillhouserecords.com)

FRAMTID – "Under the Ashes" LP

Long-overdue reissue of this tough-to-find 2002 powerhouse LP. FRAMTID draws influence from classic UK crust and ups the intensity level to heretofore unexplored dimensions. *Under the Ashes* is an unrelenting hardcore assault, staggeringly heavy (without being metal), driving, pulverizing, and flawlessly executed. If this is not already sold out (again), jump on it. The sole lyrics to "The Total Arse" sum it up, nice 'n' neat: "It's just getting worse and worse / Hope's destroyed." (CS)
(Black Water, PO Box 5223, Portland, OR 97208)

FRUIT SALAD – "Blood Power" EP

Unrelenting fast punk/thrash out of Boston, with well-done, funny (ha ha), down-to-earth vocals. Searing overdriven guitar riffs and licentious, seizure-inducing, snare keeps the wall of death stomping the living shit of all poseurs in its path. Sound quality is better on this release than previous endeavors, and if you have the chance, these folks rip live. (BS)
(Teenage Disco Bloodbath, www.tdbrecords.com)

FUCKED UP – "Year of the Pig" EP

This is a complete HUNK O' SHIT!!!! A-side "Year of the Pig" is an 18-minute "tune" with lounge music, bad, sappy female vocals, and an occasional rock moment. I was told I had to wait for the build-up—I waited, got to the end of the record, and was pissed. What a waste of time. Can't even clean my room to this shit. No matter the genre you would like to plug this into, it falls really short of being good. Side B is bit closer to what you would expect today from FUCKED UP, but the disaster on side A left me not caring enough to continue writing about this. (MS)
(What's Your Rupture, www.whatsyourrupture.com)

FUCKED UP / HARD SKIN – split EP

Fuck yes! FUCKED UP has teamed up with HARD SKIN to deliver a goliath of a punk rock split EP! FUCKED UP offers their damaged punk first. Skins and punks from all over the world know the danger FUCKED UP present. FUCKED UP is an untamed punk beast with an uncommon mastery of the hardcore idiom! When these Toronto ruffians scream out with vitriol and sarcasm in "Toronto FC," your fucking hardcore world speeds out of control!! The deadly mixture of satanic guitar and maniacal vocals rubs this music in your face! Very few punk bands ever achieve this sick level of wound-up vocals feeding on anxious guitar noise! Get out of the fucking way! Turn this record over and HARD SKIN puts their authentic skinhead worship twist on a respectful tribute to BLITZ and THE PROFESSIONALS. HARD SKIN on record is quite good. Live, they are nothing short of fucking brilliant! Go see HARD SKIN! Pay attention! FUCKED UP is presently burning entire cities to the ground near your home! (BR)
(No Future, 3 Adelaide House, 21 Wells Road, Malvern, Worcs, UK)

FUMBLE – "Rise" CD

Decent enough indie rock, I s'pose. If folks remember the likes of KNAPSACK, this isn't too far removed. The trouble these days, of course, with modern technology, is that everything sounds (production-wise) pretty damn good. Just the actual songs don't, er, stand out too much. Not bad. OK if you like this sort of thing, I guess... Artwork is pretty cool. I'm guessing they're Finnish too. (RK)
(Walk Alone, www.walkalone-records.com)

FUNEROT – "Nova II" LP

Yes!! Here we have the second LP from this Lake Forest, WA slaughterhouse. Solo: Ben. Inventive (dare I say a tad arty?) thrash-metal that isn't afraid to whip out a Ginn riff (OK, it only happens once, but still!) and a vocalist that goes for a more restrained Tom Araya bark. You know, not yelling or screaming but still tough as nails. Solo: Dan. I recommend listening to side two first. Solo: Max. Plus you get a cover of WHIPLASH's "Spit on Your Grave" and that's as good a reference point as any. This rules. Glad I got a reviewer copy! (JU)
(Inimical, PO Box 2803, Seattle, WA 98111)

FUTURE VIRGINS – "Part II: Words and Sounds" EP

Here's a handful of songs that beg to be sung along to that are almost too charming but are just rough enough around the edges to keep from straying too far into pop territory. It's just what you'd expect from this combination of members of SEXY, JACK PALANCE BAND, and YE OLDE BUTTFUCK. My advice: drag your turntable out to the porch, crack a cold one, and listen to this in the summer heat with some people you like. You won't be disappointed. (AA)
(Plan-It-X South, 720 Pickens Ave., Pensacola, FL 32503)

GIANT HAYSTACKS – "All Back to Mine/The Scar That Will Never Heal"

Two tracks from the now defunct GIANT HAYSTACKS. They were such a refreshing change when they broke on the scene, a band that wasn't garage or hardcore—who would have thought it? British post-punk from the late '70s met American post-punk from the early '80s and was given a Glasgow kiss. The WIRE/GANG OF FOUR/MISSION OF BURMA/MINUTEMEN influences are easy to hear, but they deliver the goods with wit and warmth, and bring current topics into the lyrics. The two tracks here are typical: mid-tempo, (not too) minimal, and rhythmic. Short and sweet, and sharp as a knife. (AD)
(Art of the Underground, www.artoftheunderground.com)

THE GODDAMN GALLOWS – "Gutterbillyblues" CD

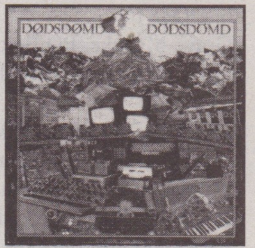
Bit of an anomaly this one. A rockabilly/rock n roll trio (complete with upright bass, and a great JOHN DOEsque rock voice) comprised of one tattooed rockabilly/greaser, and two tattooed crusty patch-covered squatter punkers. Crooning ditties about drugs, and drinking and squatting, and suchlike. Weird, but it works really well. I'm usually not a fan of rockabilly, nor crusties, but these guys are really growing on me (albeit like that fungus infected sore that never seems to go away)... (RK)
(GBC)

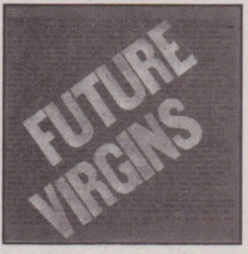
GOLDEN GORILLA – LP

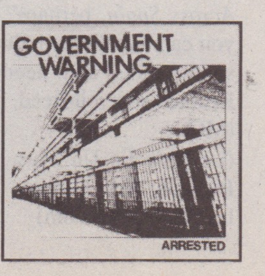
When will the modern stoner rock/sludge/doom/drone/who-cares ever stop? I love this music, I really do, but I just get so damn tired of hearing rip-off stoner rock bands. Everyone has started some shitty slow band trying to sound like SLEEP or ISIS or SUNN 0))) and I'm fucking gonna puke BBB-BLLAAARRRFFFFFFFGGGG! Alright, I'm done with that; this band sounds like a second rate IRON MONKEY and I'm just now getting the gorilla reference—good, grate, grand. (NE)
(Prügelprinz, www.goldengorilla.com)

GOVERNMENT WARNING – "Arrested" EP

Rulin' and ragin' fucking hardcore punk here from GW. This is by far their best shit to date. A jaw-drop-







ping opener will bring EFFIGIES' "Body Bag" or even "Anytown" by REAGAN YOUTH to mind! While most fools are spending their time and money going to see these lame-ass reunion shows of bands with dead members, they will be missing out on some of the most fucking ferocious punk shit coming out right now! Posers may catch up in about 15 years but I doubt it. GOVERNMENT WARNING has put out a good record here so don't waste your time on bullshit, get this. (MS)

(Grave Mistake, PO Box 12482 Richmond, VA 23241, www.gravemistakerecords.com)

GRANDE ROSES – "Arctic Heart" EP

I get the impression that this might be one of those new things that *the man* is feeding to us. I like it, but I shouldn't like it. It's kind of folky and I don't usually like folky. It's JOHNNY CASH country-ish. I resist JOHNNY CASH country-ish. It's (not just a little) polished. I am not usually a fan of polished. It features some acoustic instruments. I love to hate acoustic. Still, I have to admit to liking this quite a bit. This will be big, or maybe just indie big, someday. Until then, I'll like it. (KK)

(New Noise, Box 55, 83221 Froson, SWEDEN, www.skitsylen.tk)

THE GREATEST HITS – "For a Good Time Call..." CD

Punkish glam: got nothing against it (I rate the FORGOTTEN REBELS' *This Ain't Hollywood* LP as their best), especially if it combines solid glam songwriting with some fucking energy. All too often, however, it seems like an excuse to not bother with fully-fleshed out songs, as here. But I like the expression of the guy on the cell phone on the back cover, so I'll eschew the easy jokes that the band's name and album title seem to beg. (DD)

(www.trashbinalleyrock.com)

GRUPO SUB-1 – "Tercer Gradi en Leningrado" LP

I've stumbled upon a few other releases by these Spanish wave-punkers, but this is easily their strongest. Although GRUPO SUB-1 attempt to present themselves as futuristic thrillseekers and mutant new wavers, there's something about them that is more authentically punk sounding than bands like THE EPOXIES and their ilk. A new wave *Bloodstains Across Spain*, perhaps? That works for me. If you can handle the industrial lean of the recent synth-punks and need a sneering Rip Off Records sheen instead, this is your dream disc. (MC)

(La Vida Es Un Mus, 178 Trelawney Estate, Paragon Rd, London, E9 6PQ, UK, www.lavidaesunmus.com)

THE GUT-BUGS / THE STATUTORY APE – split EP

Oh god... "Punk Metal vs. Garage Metal." Hell has frozen over. Pigs fly. The world, as we once knew it, is over. STATUTORY APE has no punk vibe at all ('cept stupidity). Neither of their tunes here are compelling in the slightest. Moron beer metal faking punk. Stupid and loud enough to win over THE GUT-BUGS though, whose side is nearly inaudible. Shame really, as their particular brand of "garage" (translation: basic punk, not garagey at all!) is clearly more up my alley. "The Matt-Tard-Twist" will offend more than its share of folks (by design, I presume), so if you want needlessly offensive crap, look no further. (MC)

(Burnt Sienna, 207 Powhatan, Columbus, OH 43204)

THE GUT REACTIONS – "So Sick Of You" EP

Never in a million years would I buy a record that has on the cover R2D2 riding a motorcycle while wearing sneakers and chugging some fancy imported beer. I do have some standards. The music would have to be some damn fine shit for me to have to look at this cover at home. THE GUT REACTIONS deliver lo-fi SUPERCHARGER-esque tunes with a more twangy guitar sound and more earnest vocals. It's pretty catchy, though I feel like I have heard the song "So Sick of You" too many times before. (CK)

(Milk 'n' Herpes, thegutreactions@hotmail.com)

THE GUTS / THE PROZACS – split EP

Okay, almost every punk loves (or at least likes) THE RAMONES and their simple-yet-catchy songs. The problem with THE RAMONES is that they have inspired a host of crappy bands that have taken their simple style but forgotten to write a decent song to go with that recycled Johnny Ramone riff. THE PROZACS are a perfect example of such a band. Additionally, THE PROZACS sound like they may have been on Prozac with the energy level on their side of the split. Even when they add a touch of the TOY DOLLS into their sound, THE PROZACS just give us a great big yawn fest. THE GUTS remind me of a more positive mid-'90s-era QUEERS, with two decent pop punk numbers and one terrible slowed-down piece. Overall, this is a definite miss unless you are the ultimate collector and able to buy everything. Otherwise, there will probably be 50 records that are more worthy of your time and money than this slab of environmental waste. (JF)

(Cabana 1 Records, www.cabana1records.com)

HALF GORILLA – "Graceless Beasts" EP

From the label that brought us the ABADDON EP last month. And like ABADDON, this is heavy, heavy hardcore. They also aren't afraid to speed things up. On "Culture of Death" they kick it into high gear, and it sounds more metal. And they have a track about King Kong, "Goddamn Kong": "Crush them fucking natives / Slay down the dinosaur / That girl is so yours." I do think there is some good sounding hardcore on this record but it's hard to hear. I first turned up my stereo then I went to see if my turntable was OK. This is a crappy sounding EP—the volume is very low and there is no high end. What's with all the good stuff coming out of Wisconsin? (MH)

(Halo of Flies, 430 E. Loyd Street, Milwaukee, WI 53212)

HIS ELECTRO BLUE VOICE – "Fog" EP

This is the dark, fuzzed-out, proto-goth rock sound that is nearly impossible to get right. Easily this debut EP from Italy's HIS ELECTRO BLUE VOICE could have turned into an eyeliner-smearing wuss fest or fallen into the realm of boring rock wasteland. If there were a few less gasps for breath between unintelligible outbursts, if the guitar was any less raw (or more raw for that matter), if it didn't cause me myself to feel this urge to rub black makeup around my eyes and dance around, it may have fallen flat. No chance of that. Steering clear of being overly dramatic or theatrical by noising the fuck out, this EP plays between a much more raw and fucked up VIRGIN PRUNES and an urgent CRISIS. (AL)

(S-S, 1114 – 21st Street, Sacramento, CA, 95814)

HOMOSTUPIDS – "The Brutal Birthday" EP

I'm sure glad my retard credentials finally cleared—between this, NIPPLE VIOLATOR, and the CATHOLIC BOYS, I've really stuck dumbshit gold in my review inbox this month. Imagine if the SWELL MAPS did lots of drugs...oh yeah, wait...if they did *uncool* drugs like paint and Toilet Duck, and got a hold of an 808 and the world's saddest microphone. You're getting warmer... (JP)

(Richie, no address)

HOMOSTUPIDS – "The Intern" LP

I've feared having to write this review. This noisy mess of a record is for those times you decided to take acid or do mountatins of speed at four in the morning on a work night, that three-week old burrito butt under your bed, or puking Wild Turkey on yourself in front of your boss. A record for true fuck-ups and assholes. In the tried and true tradition of bands like the GRABBIES, this is nihilistic, trashy, inept hardcore at its finest and most insulting. The production is perfectly shitty and I wouldn't have it any other way. There is not one ounce of an attempt to fit some sort of accept-

able mold with this. Seek this out along with their *Brutal Birthday* and *The Glow* EPs. Go fuck yourself! Parts Unknown, you have yet to fail us (though I personally wasn't so into that DROP OUT 12") (JU)
(Parts Unknown, PO Box 031, Tom's River, NJ 08754)

HOODS UP – "Arms Still Open" CD

Although the ethics of straight edge go against everything I hold dear to my heart, I still have quite a soft spot for '88 style youth crew. These Germans have got the sound and look down pat; it's all college jackets, dodgy '80s hairdos, Swatch watches, and CHAIN OF STRENGTH-style riffage. While not up there with the real cream of the crop (THE FIRST STEP, OUR TURN, POINTING FINGER, etc.), these guys are good at what they do. If you dig the genre and aren't afraid of the odd straight edge cliché, you should check these dudes out. Though I have to ask: Are you not tired of singing about "the best of times" yet??? C'mon guys, there has to be something more original to write about! (TB)
(Refuse, PO Box 7, 02-792 Warszawa 78, POLAND)

HUNDREDS AND THOUSANDS – CD

This is being released as a 10" that comes with a free CD so you can MP3 it I guess? They are aiming for a *Zen Arcade/Double Nickels On The Dime* fusion and are very reverent in demonstrating their allegiance to early SST. The MINUTEMEN influence is heavily stated—basslines are of the Mike Watt school, something about the guitar sound reminds me of the song "King of the Hill"—the vocals are not triumphant or defiant-sounding like MINUTEMEN songs though, they are kind of downtrodden… These aren't fight songs with a Watt/Boon dance beat, they are songs of the beaten down. There's no sense of underdog triumph, just a kind of wistful melancholy. This isn't "punk funk" sounding at all, more post-punk, post-hardcore, pre-college rock maybe? Ha! The MINUTEMEN influence is so clear it's kind of hard to take them seriously as a band with their own identity. I love the MINUTEMEN too, but I think maybe this band needs another element to take them from fan fiction writers to rad band in their own right somehow. It's not bad music by any means, it kind of makes me think of maybe the GEISHA GIRLS where I like all the influences and think their music is pretty cool… but it's too explicit. They need to fuck with their record collection rather than replicate it. (LG)
(Heartbreak, www.heartbreakbeatrecords.com)

INDEPENDENT PROGRESS – "Far From These Shores" CD

Street punk from Minneapolis that teeters on melodic hardcore. Fast and anthemic along the ways of the Matt songs from RANCID. Similar vocals on this decent full-length that keeps it simple and loud. (RL)
(no address)

INFEKCJA – "Kazdy Robotnik" LP

A reissue of this Polish band's 22-song demo tape from 1995 on vinyl. Their better-recorded *Przecrani* full-length from a few years ago mixed metallic Euro-crust and grind parts but with much less effect than these earlier, lower-fi tracks. At points reminiscent of gruff-throated, primordial Brazillian crossover muck and late-'80s/early-'90s Boston-hardcore-influenced UK thrash (à la INTENSE DEGREE, HERESY), but still swarming with blast-beats, gruff, shrieked vocal tradeoffs, and the high energy of Polish hardcore. While the song structures still have the metallic edge of the late-'80s Manic Ears/COR Records bands, the sound isn't particularly metal—more raw thrash with wild "best we can do at the time" mishaps, making for a less ponderous and more blasting LP. Comes with an equally severe lyric booklet that attacks politicians, sexists, environmental destruction, and more. Great release. (KS)
(Trujaca Fala, PO Box 13, 81 806 Sopot 6, POLAND, www.trujacafala.com)

IRON CROSS – "2 Piece and a Biscuit" CD

The pseudo one-sheet printed on the back of this CD describing how IRON CROSS "inspired countless bands in three waves of underground music" is ridiculous. The three new songs from these guys are pretty paint-by-the-numbers Oi music devoid of almost all the abrasive, harsh qualities that made the original IRON CROSS so great on records like the *Flex Your Head* comp. Much like their COCK SPARRER cover, this is pretty predictable skinhead stuff. Tacked on the end of this disc are three bonus tracks from the singer's other band, a decent country-Oi! (i.e., rockabilly) outfit called the ROYAL AMERICANS. (CC)
(13th State, 69 Governor Street #213, Providence, RI, 02906)

ISKRA / SELF RULE – split EP

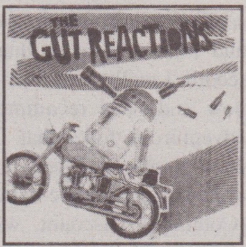
ISKRA bore through with maniacally caustic speed metal influenced punk / crust, these are top notch tracks, if you dig their 12" this one will definitely kick your ears in as well. Heavily distorted guitar with rapid-attack picking and excellent blown-out throaty with serious fucking hooks. SELF RULE side sounds a bit stripped down in comparison to the sound and feel of the ISKRA side, these folks play some good blistering late 80's UK influenced crust punk, and there's serious gems on their side, with scathing vocals and frenetic riffs with lots of note bends and solid leads; killer unstable jams that stack precariously always seeming on the verge of collapse. Good shit. (BS)
(Unrest, Suite 239, 10654 82nd Ave, Edmonton, AB, T6E 2A7, CANADA, www.unrestrecords.com)

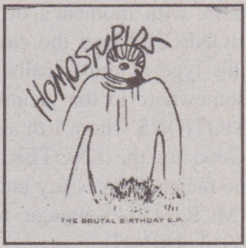
JENA BERLIN – "Quo Vadimus" CD

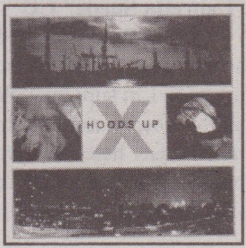
From Philly, this emo core-ish band sounds a lot like HOT WATER MUSIC. Powerful and melodic with mostly shouting vocals over tasteful guitar parts reminiscent of SAMIAM. This second full length from this combo sounds pretty good to me. (RL)
(Jump Start, www.jumpstartrecords.com)

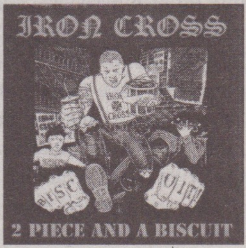
EL JESUS DE MAGICO – "Funeral Home Sessions" EP

I know this record is gonna fly below everyone's radar. To me, it sounds like JESUS AND MARY CHAIN, CHROME, and PINK REASON all meeting under the same leaky umbrella. Keyboards that sound like guitars, guitars that sound like keyboards, and delayed vocals make these downer, anti-pop songs stick. Lazy, make a rainy day seem just that much more depressing, codeine









soaked, art-damaged, post-everything, muck and mire and more than just an "art punk" record. I really love this. I've had it for a while now and have recommended it to the more adventurous folks that I think might have a passing interest. Check it out if you're into anything besides cookie-cutter trash. (JU)
(Columbus Discount, www.columbusdiscountrecords.com)

KVOTERINGEN / NITAD – split CD

The follow-up to KVOTERINGEN's *Blister Prognos* LP is this split CD (soon to be released on vinyl) with fellow Swedes NITAD. While the three KVOTERINGEN songs on here continue in the fine tradition of classic Swedish D-beat hardcore with which they've blessed us thus far, I feel they are somewhat lacking in the ferocity of the first two EPs. Not their finest moment but still pretty rad. I can't say I'm too into the NITAD tracks on this either. Their brand of fairly straightforward punk with moment's of *Ass Cobra*-era TURBONEGRO lack the catchy factor that I feel this type of music calls for, making this land somewhere in the vicinity of Japan's SLOWMOTIONS whom I'm also not all too fond of. Good for the KVOTERINGEN songs, but by no means a necessary purchase. (JU)
(MCR, 157 Kamiagu Maizuru, Kyoto 624-0913, JAPAN)

LABRETTA SUEDE AND THE MOTEL 6 – "Labretta Suede" CD

Psychobilly-flavored bar rock. Not as bad as that sounds, but not much better, at least for my ears. I'm sure they please some crowds and all, but there's nothing that connects to the primal whasis here. Featuring fan art in the CD booklet is a nice touch, though. (DD)
(No label, on address)

LAMA – "Tavastia" LP

LAMA are no strangers to fans of distinctive Finnish hardcore, and this live LP benefits from especially strong production values; songs like "Nimeton" have surprisingly varied textures. More the most part, this release owes its success to the amazing mix of rock hard drumming and exceptional clarity. This is the first time I've heard a Finnish live release where the sound approaches live excitement; in some cases, it even surpasses some studio releases! Can't afford the round trip to Finland? There are moments where this smokin' live record comes very close. (SS)
(Combat Rock, PL65, 11101 Riihimaki, FINLAND)

LÄRM – "Campaign for Musical Destruction/Straight On View" LP

Not sure if this is a legit release, but nonetheless this is mandatory stuff. LÄRM (along with HERESY and SIEGE) were the true precursors to power-violence. Out of control, fast as fuck hardcore with breakdowns and lightening speed blasts. Taking early-'80s hardcore and straight edge and turning the speed dial to ten. So many bands have been influenced by LÄRM that everyone should have at least one of their records tucked in their collections. What we have here is their full LP (*Straight On View*) and their side of their LP with STANX. All killer, no filler…due to having like 45 tracks pressed on the 12 inches, it's a little muddy, but still well worth tracking down. (TB)
(Way Back When, www.waybackwhenrecords.com)

THE LAST HOPE – "Violence, Vengence, and Retribution" CD

The Bible-thumping, fundamentalist version of the UNSEEN. The LAST HOPE don't touch on any "hot button" issues, but they do have links to bible studies and Christian tattoo shops all over their stupid MySpace page. As for myself, I wish they would try their afterlife theory out and flip their van. (JF)
(Hairball 8, www.hairball8.com)

LEFTOVERS – "On the Move" CD

Are we back in the mid-'90s again? Total retro pop-punk like the APERS, QUEERS or the mighty 'WEASEL (Ben Weasel is on the buttons so that makes sense). They have the sound and the hooks, bringing an almost BEACH BOYS/power-pop edge to their punk. I'm afraid I don't have too much stomach for this sound these days, but if you are like our very own Andy Darling and live for this shit, you won't be disappointed. For dudes with Chuck Taylors and leather jackets only. (TB)
(Rally, PO Box 447, Mars, PA 16046)

LET'S GROW – "Disease of Modern Times" LP

This is an ideal example of what modern hardcore should be! LET'S GROW is a perfect blend of fast-tempo straight edge hardcore aggression and cool lyrics that stand above most in the genre. After releasing two outstanding EPs (one on 625), a full-length was the next logical step. Honestly, I usually don't like LPs from hardcore bands because in almost every case they're too long to sustain the energy the whole way through. I listened to this, however, pretty much from start to finish—reading the lyrics and everything—which is saying a lot considering the amount of records I try to check out each month at *MRR* in one sitting. LET'S GROW hail from Serbia, which may explain the urgency felt in the music and words. The songs aren't necessarily political—the band is more on the positive straight edge side of things—but they definitely go beyond the generic personal or "you stabbed me in the back" shit that so many bands bore us with. Definitely worth checking out. (BG)
(Refuse/Thrashbastard, PO Box 7, 02-792 Warszawa 78, POLAND, www.refuserecords.prv.pl)

LIFE TRAP – "Bleak Reality" EP

I love this label man, love it…every release a winner. I got pretty tired of the thrash revival shit, but this new wave of bands have been blowing my mind; right up there with GOVERNMENT WARNING, DIRECT CONTROL, WASTED TIME, and the like, this band blow the fucking doors off. This might even be my fave hardcore record of the year. Relentless hardcore taking the hooks of ARTICLES OF FAITH, but with the speed and power of the first POISON IDEA EP. Classic. (TB)
(No Way, 3211 Idlewood Avenue, Richmond, VA 23221, www.nowayrecords.com)

THE LONG AND SHORT OF IT – "Flight of the Mallard" CD

Maybe could have done with shortening the band name, but I suppose that's splitting hairs. THE LONG AND SHORT OF IT hail from sunny San Diego, California, and they share traits with some of that region's more famous musical sons; more specifically, a tendency towards driving rock action. I'm referring of course to the likes of ROCKET FROM THE CRYPT or HOT SNAKES (whose Gar Wood recorded this platter). What you get is punk-tinged indie rock with a lot of hard rock influence in the tempos and snaking guitar lines that remind me of JESUS LIZARD. The vocalist is reaching for a "weird" delivery in the style of David Yow, but while Yow sounds legitimately damaged and not to be messed with, this guy borders on the annoying. Still, there are enough tempo changes and stylistic departures to keep this musically interesting, and the production is heavy enough to give the driving rhythms suitable power. If you're missing '90s muscular Midwestern arty indie-rock, this should satisfy your craving. (AM)
(Black Rabbit Rebellion, no address)

LORDS OF LIGHT – "Dividing Up" EP

This is kind of rotten. I am not sure of the context of this band, but every time I see their name I am reminded of the awesome post-BEHEAD THE PROPHET N.L.S.L. band LORDS OF LIGHTSPEED. Why would another Northwestern band call themselves by such a similar band name? Especially one that sucks as much as LORDS OF LIGHT. The vocalist reminds me of horrible '90s rock radio vocals, that CREED/HOOTIE nasal farmboy barf sound. I've just been told that this band is somehow part of the grind scene, which is totally mystifying; it seriously sounds like garden center adult contemporary rock. (LG)
(Iron Lung, PO Box 95521 Seattle WA 98145-2521)

LOVVERS – "Near Enough For Jazz/Special Needs"

Distorto, grunge-damaged art punk that owes more to DINOSAUR JR and SONIC YOUTH than any hardcore luminaries one could care to name. It's an approach that works for them and I have to say I was less bored by this record than I have been by just about any DINOSAUR output. This pays obvious homage to the early days of Sub Pop but could easily find a place on that label's current roster next to the likes of PISSED JEANS. That they come from Nottingham is all the more bewildering. (AM)
(Jonson Family, www.jonsonfamily.com)

LUTECE BORGIA – "Long Live Summer" CD

I wasn't expecting much when I saw the hideous cover photo (beach themed with the band in bathing suits), but lo and behold these guys can pump out some great anthemic street punk. The Oi! influence on these songs is undeniable, especially with the vocals. If you are fan of the 4 SKINS or COCKNEY REJECTS, and you don't mind that half of the songs are sung in French, then pick this up. Who knew a trio of Parisian norms could bang out twelve skinhead jams better than most skinheads? Well done. (CC)
(Une Vie Pour Rien?, www.uvpr.fr)

M:40 – "Historiens Svarta Vingslag" CD

This is raging melodic Swedish hardcore from M:40. The production of this disc reminds me of some metal bands such as THE DARKEST HOUR, which is to say that the quality is perfect. You can't hear a fuckup, try as you might. Some people like this production, while I have always been a fan of rawer punk/hardcore. That doesn't mean this isn't totally decent and really well done though, because it is. The lyrics are pretty awesome too. I like it in a way; it's just the clean recording that I dislike and the fact that it's a bit too melodic at times. This band is probably amazing live and I would recommend this release to anyone who likes HATEBREED or AS SHADOWS FALL. (WK)
(Halvfabrikat, www.halvfabrikat.net)

THE MAKEOUT PARTY – "2 Ez 2 Love U/Hedberg Boogie"

Loving, loving, and guess what—loving it. Two nifty little tracks, mixing some light '60s pop with a more wandering-but-never-getting-lost VELVET UNDERGROUND/MY BLOODY VALENTINE experimental edge. This has C86 scribbled all over it; if you totally dig THE PASTELS and early THE PRIMITIVES then this, my kindred spirit, will bring memories of those sweet days of JOHN PEEL, naïve fringes, and thrift store parkas come flooding in. Top ten of the year and there's still four months to go. Brilliant. (SD)
(Burger, 1370 S. Sanderson, Anaheim, CA 92806.)

MANVILLE – "Crazy Tang" EP

Boise, Idaho-based MANVILLE layers not quite digested screamed vocals over a bed of trashy, not taking themselves seriously at all, party rock. There are two songs on this one-sided 7"—"Crazy Tang" and "Zombie Wang." They're loud and they're a little dirty and they're probably kinda crude. Good for them. (AL)
($3 ppd: 208 Records, 2218 N 34th, Boise, ID 33703)

MCRAD/FRONTSIDE FIVE – "50/50 Split" CD

MCRAD is the project of '80s pro skater Chuck Treece and has a heavy BAD BRAINS influence right down to the dub songs. Unfortunately it doesn't have the power of BAD BRAINS, but on the good side it doesn't have the homophobia either. The MCRAD tracks are a mix of new stuff and some old live material. FRONTSIDE FIVE kick off their half of the CD with eight tracks of inspired if not overall original skate punk. If you are a fan of stuff like the FACTION or LOS OLIVIDOS, than you will probably enjoy the FRONTSIDE FIVE. (JF)
(Five Core, www.5corerecords.com)

THE MEASURE [S.A.] / MODERN MACHINES – split EP

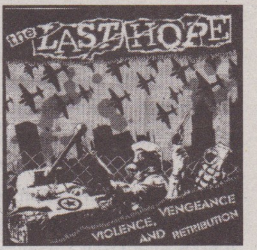
THE MEASURE sounds really great here; very good vocals give this an almost punky BUILT TO SPILL sound on their first track, maybe even a more punker WEAKERTHANS—they know how to write a song. It's not the first time I've been impressed by this band. MODERN MACHINES give us more of their melodic-yet-edgy punk. Upbeat and again well-sung with a just a hint of twang. Very good, both bands get an A. (AD)
(Salinas, PO Box 20995, Ferndale, MI 48200)

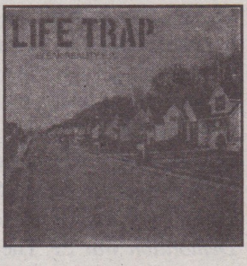
MEINHOF – "The Rush Hour of Human Misery" LP

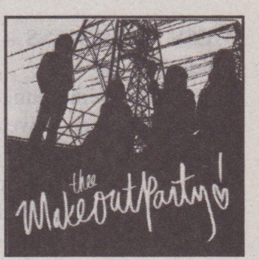
Okay, before I launch into a tirade about punk clichés, MEINHOF is a two-person techno/crust band with drum machine, dirge-y guitar, and strong, angry female vocals. It's not mind-blowing, but it's not terrible either. I suppose I would call it solidly mediocre. As for the art and lyrics, here it takes a turn for the awful with lines like "This is not the fucking way/Keep it real or go away/You don't care cause you are sick/Selfish hateful Nazi freak," or "Brainwashing, mind control, I don't need that shit at all!" The cover is the usual assortment of politicians, piles of skulls, riot cops, starving children, and weapons. I seriously feel like I can't take any more of these tired, recycled images and ideas. Now, we all know that corporate greed and corrupt governments (all governments being corrupt) are destroying the world via war, economic subjugation, etc. We all know we are slaves to the machine, or zombies, or whatever, right? Then can we please skip these overused, overly simplified punk/crust clichés? I don't want to see George W. Bush's fucking face anymore, or diagrams of the capitalist machine spitting out workers, or a stupid angry fetus with a gun (FYI, not all of these appear in the MEINHOF record, but have appeared in countless recent records). That was all well and good and controversial in years past, but it all just seems so corny and useless now. Can we please stop and try to think of better, smarter, more compelling words and images to discuss these truly horrible things going on in the world? If these things are important enough to write a whole record about, they in turn deserve to be looked at in a meaningful way. (AA)
(Meinhof/Phobia/Shamen, crustboy@poczta.onet.pl)

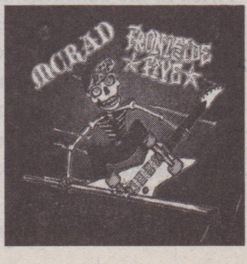
THE MENTAL – "Extended Play" LP

I almost came when I saw this come in! I'm sure many of you can relate when I say that the SUBHUMANS were one of the most important bands in my punk rock









formative years. Punk music in general helped shape my outlook towards the world, but Dick Lucas (along with Jello) was probably the most influential lyricist that made me realize that punk *meant something*. And of course, the music of the SUBHUMANS was astounding and unique, with each record a masterpiece in its own right. I heard about THE MENTAL, which was Dick Lucas' prior band, but more as a legend since I didn't know anyone who had the 7-inch. Well, now it's finally available once again, and best of all, on vinyl. Not only do you get the impossible-to-find EP from 1979, but four extra tracks that were intended for a second EP are here as well. Of course, this is not exactly the SUBHUMANS, since the rest of the band consisted of different people, but it definitely has a similar resonance. Some of the songs even sound like they could have been found on the *Demolition War* EP. The lyrics are cool, even if a bit primitive compared to what would come later, but Dick spits them out with that recognizable twang you'd expect. Obviously, you need this if you were ever a fan (who the fuck wasn't?!). (BG)
(Demo Tapes, PO Box 357, London, SE19 1AD, UK)

THE MENZINGERS – "A Lesson in the Abuse of Information Technology" CD

I can hardly stand to listen to this kind of music: suburban white boys screaming so hard, so sincerely ("Our throats are bleeding"[!]) about *nothing*, while layers of perfectly produced guitars and backup vocals pile around like so many empty Slurpee cups. Don't even get me started on their horrid cover of the Clash's "Straight to Hell." It seems like this band wants to make it big—let's hope they do so we don't have to review them any more. (PC)
(Go Kart, PO Box 20, Prince Street Station, New York, NY 10012, www.gokartrecords.com)

MESS MESS MESS – "Could You Bet…We Made It?" EP

These Italian punks come running to the front of the stage to welcome you, bristled and studded chaos punks! The well-played street punk on this LP will appeal to fans of OXYMORON and CHARGE 69. The enthusiasm captured on this record leads one to believe that MESS MESS MESS would be a barrel of laughs in a sweaty, beer-soaked local bar. The lyrics in the songs on the *Could You Bet*... LP deals with several issues that are the mainstay of riot punks: greedy politicians, corrupt government officials, brutal police, and rampant unemployment in the working class. The MESS MESS MESS record has a skillful guitar chug, well-placed female vocals, great harmonies, and a powerhouse bass and drum background. This is well-crafted music performed by veteran punk rock musicians. Listen to the LP! More importantly, support hard-working bands like MESS MESS MESS, DEADLINE, and EVIL CONDUCT when they come to your town! (BR)
(No Flags, noflagsrecords@technomail.it)

MIDNIGHT CREEPS – "Singles/Splits/Demos/Live" CD/DVD

MOTÖRHEAD meets the RUNAWAYS...kind of. Bad attitude, snot, and sleaze seem to be the characteristics here, rocky mid-tempo punk with female vocals. This is a collection of stuff (see title) and includes a lengthy DVD of live footage, including a performance at the Wasted Festival in the UK. (AD)
(Rodent Popsicle, PO Box 1143, Allston, MA 02134, www.rodentpopsicle.com)

THE MODERETTES – " Get Modern or Get Fucked" LP

A much needed compilation of one of the best power-pop acts ever, containing their *Teen City* 12", their *View From The Bottom* 12", three tracks off the *Gone...But Not Forgotten* LP, and one live track (all recorded from 1980 to 1982). Much more punk rock than their fellow Canadians POINTED STICKS, with more in common with THE YOUNG CANADIANS and THE CROWD. If you've been getting of to the new crop of power-poppers THE TRANZMITORS, GENTLEMAN JESSE, and whatnot, dig up your history and get a copy of this. (SD)
(Lady Kinky Karrot, ladykinkykarrot@yahoo.com)

MORTIMER – "General Idi Amin Dada/Como Un Dia Mas" EP

What you got here is a Munster Spanish punk single reissue from 1978, and I gotta tell you, this thing is fucking *fab*!!!! MORTIMER are what I like to define as "weird punk".....the kinda punk that was influenced by plenty of ROXY MUSIC and SPARKS and executed by "older" off-beat motherfuckers instead of pimply-faced youth…!!!!! Nice….!!!! Lick my tits baby, this flavor is *groovie*!!!!! (SW)
(Munster, www.munster-records.com)

MOUTH SEWN SHUT – "Doomed Future Today" CD

This Boston quartet play a style of crusty hardcore that, when they are "going for it," is not far off from what DEFORMED CONSCIENCE were doing in their day. However, there are ska episodes all over this, and I do not in any way, shape, or form condone it. It turns this CD into laughable at best. Certain songs are totally "listenable" but as a whole this album loses my attention by the fourth track. (JU)
(Rodent Popsicle, PO Box 1143, Allston, MA 02134, www.rodentpopsicle.com)

NAPOLNARIZ – "Somos Heroes" EP

This here is the debut vinyl release from a Puerto Rican band that's been around a while, putting out CD-Rs and cassette tapes. Each of these three songs has a kinda different style. The A-side is hella street punk but super lo-fi in a really cool way. Makes it sound way more authentic than today's overproduced Hellcrap Records fare. Plus it's a fuckin' catchy tune. The second track is more like the mid-tempo stuff on MRR's *Not So Quiet*... comp from the early '80s—again, the raw production makes it sound awesome—and the last song has a more '77 sound, with a straight-up UNDERTONES riff and snotty vocals that remind me of ALBERTOS Y LOST TRIOS PARANOIAS: an infectiously fun number. These guys are stoked to finally have a record out, so give some support to the Puerto Rican punx and send away for this. (PC)
($8 ppd: TPV, 627 1/2 SW 12th St., Gainesville, FL 32601, www.myspace.com/napolnariz)

NEVER BUILT RUINS – "Built to Love" 10"

Eight tracks of charging millennium crust from Germany, with gutteral TRAGEDY-ish vocals over faster precision melodi-tallic hardcore. There's more modern rock parts and progressive guitar leads that would be doled out by the Memphis-Portland mafia, but this is the same style of urgent, charging hardcore with heaps of pick slides and dire lyrics (in Spanish, English and German). Nicely packaged with thick full-color inner and outer sleeves, solidly devastating with pummeling breakdowns and churning momentum. (KS)
(Rinderherz, Postfach 2500, Biel 7, SWITZERLAND)

NEVER ENDING PARTY – "Dog Eat Rat Fight/Vallejo"

Two songs from this Bay Area band that will have played their final show by the time this issue comes out. Yup, NEVER ENDING PARTY was the most recent project of Corbett from BOBBY JOE EBOLA AND THE CHILDREN MACNUGGITS and kept a similar off beat melodic sound. Seriously, NEVER ENDING PARTY had a sound that was like punk with someone half trying to sing normal and half crooning the lyrics. Not really sure if it works, but I have given this thing about six spins trying to figure it out and am not sick of it. Too bad they broke up, cause I would have liked to hear more. (JF)
(Freedom School, c/o Academy Records, 96 N 6th St., Brooklyn, NY 11211, www.freedomschoolrecords.com)

NINOS DEL ARCO IRIS – "Conquista la Galaxia" EP

Aecent lo-fi rock two-piece from Spain. Snotty and vicious, but almost too catchy—

each song is a riff played over and over and over. It pains me to write the words "Detox Baby," but that's the best song on here. Bad in that "but they're *really* nice guys!" way—not terrible, just sort of ho-hum. Let me put it this way: If they turn out to be 16, they're awesome. (JP)
(Blondes Must Die, Apartado Correos 68, 28529 Rivas Vaciamadrid, Madrid,? SPAIN, www.blondesmustdierecords.tk)

NIPPLE VIOLATOR – "Double Suck" LP

In 1993, God went "Oops!" and shat out this record. With song titles like "Jesus Wants to Fuck You" and "Feces Addict," you can correctly assume influences from THE MEATMEN and other "eeeeew" bands. Musically, it's "if it ain't broke" punk, but at least it's not metal, which seems to be the preferred category for most grosso bands. Yeah, yeah, it's funny and the band members have cute names (Bloody Shit Napkin, Fetus Eater), but if it weren't for weed and illiteracy, its charm would die tomorrow. (JP)
(Bloody Stump, no address given)

STEVE E. NIX & THE CUTE LEPERS – "Terminal Boredom/Prove It"

Nice little power-pop single from this new Seattle band featuring two members of THE BRIEFS. Side A attempts to answer the question "What would it have sounded like if THE EXPLODING HEARTS had written JOAN JETT's 'Bad Reputation'?" Clearly these LEPERS know what they're doing, 'cause they balance the B-side perfectly with a slower, even better number, reminiscent of the *Hypnotised*-era UNDERTONES. Class thru 'n' thru. (CS)
(1-2-3-4 Go!, www.1234gorecords.com)

NOISE NOISE NOISE – "Blazing Hot Title Track" CD

Wow. What a surprise. Never heard of these folks and they fuckin' smoke. Over-cranked distorto garage pop punk. Sounding like the bastard child of SCARED OF CHAKA, FYP, and even the MARKED MEN. The songs are all over the yard, from 40-second blazers to anthemic pop numbers. It's rough and scrappy with hooks galore…and I'm sure a blast live. Every song on this little gem is a keeper and like most bands from the arse end of nowhere (Montana) they have tons of personality and originality. Class. (TB)
(Tummy Rock, www.tummyrock.com)

NORMALS – "Normal" CD

Five tracks of tuneful-in-a-very-un-tuneful-way no-wave, from (I'm guessing) Japan. Coming off as a GIRLS AT OUR BEST tweaked out on those horrible E's knocking about in the mid '90s, speeding, nodding, tripping, freaking, and loving, all in less than 30 seconds. If LILLIPUT sniffed glue, had a collecting of MELT BANANA records, and thought pink was the new black. (SD)
(MCR, 157 Kamiagu, Maizuru, Kyoto 624-0913, JAPAN)

NORTH LINCOLN – "In a Year of Years/Blame"

Volume 18 in Art Of The Underground monthly 7" subscription club gives us a couple ditties from Grand Rapids' NORTH LINCOLN. The A-side has the trademark HOT WATER MUSIC/less-poppy-JAWBREAKER sound that has characterized this band from the start, while the flipside is a nice stripped-down acoustic number that works well. Like all Art Of The Underground Singles Club 45s, this one was out of print the day it came out. You all would do well to sign up for it, so you don't miss out on records like this. (JF)
(Art Of The Underground, PO Box 250, Buffalo, NY 14205, www.artoftheunderground.com)

OI POLLOI – "Mind the Bollocks" EP

This will go down on record as the sexiest EP OI POLLOI have ever recorded!!! Four sexy, sexy tracks covering such issues as wanking, checking your gonads for testicular cancer, circumcision, and prison rape (FYI, they are pro- the first two and anti- the others). OK, there's nothing at all sexy about prison rape!!! At any rate, I'm glad they've stopped singing in Gaelic, at least for this record, because the song about checking your balls is a brilliant sing-along: "Keep that cancer at bay / Check your ball-bag today!" Do yourself a favor and check out OI POLLOI's latest "release" (geddit?)…!!! (SW… oops, I mean, AM)
(Kämäset Levyt, www.punkinfinland.net/kamanen)

ORDER – "Saru" EP

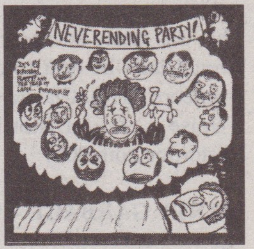
ORDER always displays a unique combination of "can't quite place it" sounds and influences that only seems to come from Japan—a powerful, swaggering mid-tempo punk rocker with scowling vocals and unique chanting back-ups (the only comparison: early, great moments of ADAM AND THE ANTS?!!!) that builds to a speedy end on one side. The flip, "Zero," is an energetic yet quirky track with a pounding drum tempo, spiraling, rhythmic vocals, and creative guitar parts with quick leads. Limited to 1,500… Two songs, too short! (KS)
(HG:Fact, www.interq.or.jp/japan/hgfact/)

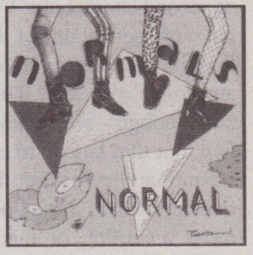
OUR CORPSE DESTROYED – "Avenge Your City" CD

Oh *hell* no. Street punk for Jesus. Now, I could give you a big ol' explanation about how religion has no place in punk due to it's subjugation of women, perpetuation of violence and hate, and its absolute dehumanization of those with differing beliefs… But hey, why bother? If the really young, hip-to-the-moment pastor gave you the "Jesus was the first rebel" speech and you bought it, well you'll just have to figure this out on your own. It'll be a while, but when you are all torn up and angry when you figure out that the basis of your whole life was a lie, punk will be waiting. (AA)
(www.ocdestroyed.com)

OUT OF TUNE – "Discontent Producers" CD

A 15-track debut album of wild, progressive Finnish post-hardcore à la KTMK, RADIO PUHELIMET, or VALSE TRISTE… This style's output is always as savage in caustic attack and speed—if not more so—as the "classic school" of traditional Finnish hardcore, and delivered with ridiculous musical chops. It's also more free to go out on a limb, at times drawing comparisons to MR. BUNGLE, PRIMUS, or other experimental rock…and here is no exception. This makes for an engaging and interesting listen, and OUT OF TUNE's seamless





delivery seals the deal with hilarious comedic yet highly political lyrics. They make great effort to market their music as "shareware" and you can listen (and download) to this entire record for free at www.out-of-tune.net/listen_dp. I have mixed feelings about that, appreciating the effort but rejecting any demands put on other people—it's an altruistic province of the rich and those willing and able to work, record, and write for free. The profit margins in punk and underground music are so ridiculously artificially low as it is, to further lower the bar is an unrealistic expectation by those who can afford to do that—not everyone can buy instruments, rehearse and record entirely on their own dime. At the same time, it's a novel way to spread music, but also begs this question why this compact disc was even produced commercially! It's packaged beautifully with nice design work and layout, but the lyrics mention buying and selling less of everything…??? (KS)
(Creative Class War, no address)

PANDEMONIUM – "Who the Fuck Are You" EP

PANDEMONIUM are the unsung band of the holy Holland hardcore trinity (BGK and LÄRM being their more popular contemporaries). This reissue of their first EP from 1983 will hopefully set some fools straight with three songs of blazingly fast, distorted hardcore. The rager on here is definitely "No Reaction," which keeps returning to an epic breakdown that was pretty uncharacteristic of the time (but would later be beat to death by many a NYC hardcore band). Classic stuff right here. (CC)
(Noise & Distortion, www.noiseanddistortion.com/005)

PARTY GARBAGE – "Cut the Kite String" EP

It seems like just yesterday that I was standing in Beerlands watching this band's first or second show. Later I would end out hanging out with them at one of their practices and drink that fine Lonestar beer. Yup, do you see where I am going with this? They're great guys. As a band though—well, they are fun and enjoyable live, but that has do to energy level and enthusiasm that they project more than their musical numbers. Now, it may be that the whole living room recording of this 7" robs them of the power that their simple, DESCENDENTS-meet-East-Bay-punk sound needs, but something is lacking on this record. Oh well, I will still make a beer run down to the corner gas station for this band anytime, just might not really play the record. (JF)
(Super Secret, www.supersecret.com)

PARTY WEIRDO – "Chart Your Cycle" EP

Woah; lots of post-ERASE ERRATA bands coming out of the UK and Ireland recently! The vocals for CHART YOUR CYCLE really remind me of a weird cross between Corin from SLEATER-KINNEY and the woman from BELLY or maybe even VERUCA SALT—that kind of theatrical wailing—but it's also kind of melodic and '90s 4AD lady band. It starts out with this really choppy, funk-punk bass and guitar, super sharp, and then goes into more traditional melodic bash-punk. The second side starts out with this total Kim Deal-style vocal/bass thing that really reminded me of the start of the PIXIES song "Gigantic" somehow. Maybe it's their rad Irish accents too? I think it's cool that this exists and that people are making their own girl scenes but I don't actually *like* this record. I tried to explain what it reminded me of because maybe you would be into it. I mean, grrl punk from Ireland? Pretty fucking rad. (LG)
(5 Euros: Sitchy Press, Drumnadubber, Drumsa Co Leitrim, IRELAND, www.stickypress.com)

THE PASTIES – "Bikes Are Sexy" EP

They're rapping. About bikes. And sex. The rest of the record by these Olympia bike punx is jangly poppy punk with hints of ska. The vocals are so helium syrupy that they prompted Hubbs to compare them to ATOM AND HIS PACKAGE. I'm sure this band could find a welcoming home on Plan-It-X but they won't find a home on my turntable. (AM)
($5 ppd: Rec The Place, 211 E. 4th Ave, Olympia, WA 98501, www.rectheplace.com)

PIOGGIA NERA – "Teatri di Menzogne" LP

Heard of a band called NERORGASMO? Those early-'80s Italian punks were the Romans' answer to (*Death Church*-era) RUDIMENTARY PENI. Apparently they are also PIOGGIA NERA's main influence—everything from their dark, mid-tempo punk sound and growled vocal delivery to their religion-in-decline artwork has been appropriated for this LP. However, aside from the "tribute band" undercurrent, *Teatri di Menzogne* is a solid nine-track album—grim, demented, menacing punk noise. Recommended for anyone who digs the aforementioned two groups. (CS)
(Chaos in Head, Daris Poltroneri, via Villani 231, 27030 Zinasco Vecchio (PV), ITALY)

LA PIOVRA – "Disastro Sonoro" EP

Retro is poison! Here we have LA PIOVRA, one of the best Italian bands at the moment, covering the PEGGIO PUNX' *Disastro Sonoro* EP in its entirety. Of course the music's great, but...I'd much rather hear these folks play their own songs and save the cover band routine for the Halloween show, y'know? (CS)
(Punx Before Profits, punksbeforeprofits@hotmail.com)

LA PIOVRA – "The First Discovered Treasures" CD

Treasures indeed! I can't believe I haven't heard these guys before. I remember there was a one-sided LP on Youth Attack a while back that disappeared overnight, but I think their lettering threw me off and made me suspect some kind of metal influence or something. Boy was I wrong! LA PIOVRA is fucking pure hardcore power that never lets up. Imagine LOS CRUDOS mixed with MINOR THREAT and RAW POWER. And just like what made those bands so great, this has manic drumming and bass, excellent guitar work that goes beyond simple power chords, and screaming, high-speed vocals full of fury. I mean, even though this CD collects the LP, their EP on Punx Before Profits, and two unreleased demo tracks, the whole thing still clocks in at less than eighteen minutes! Easily the best band from Italy in a long time; you simply have to get this if you weren't lucky enough to pick up the vinyl. Recommended. (BG)
(Youth Attack, www.ihateyouthattack.com)

DEREK LYN PLASTIC – "Negative Feelings" EP

Though side A is low-calorie JAY REATARD, the flip boats a moderate hit, "Getaway," reminiscent of great keyboard pop bands (THE MINDS), but far enough away from cheese-dick keyboard pop bands (THE EPOXIES). This freako farfisa style is helped along by the ole "taking it *waaay* too seriously" vocal delivery that, for some goddamn reason, works like a charm with songs like this. (JP)
(NMG, 300 S. Lakewood Drive, Orlando, FL 32803)

THE PMRC – "Polyphonics for the Modern Renaissance Cannibal" EP

This Texas outfit has the no-nonsense energy (and a lot of the irony) of ED GEIN'S CAR, albeit with a spare, rockin' energy of their own. Then again, THE DICKS may be the closest comparison, though the pumped-up energy of a song like "My Annihilation" sometimes has a HC feel that makes it difficult for your feet to keep up with the beat. The politically pointed lyrics rounds out a memorable package. Well above the standard. (SS)
($5.50 ppd: Motorchest, PO Box 725, Poplar Bluff, MO 63901)

POTBOILER – "Izzy Alcantara" EP

Melodic punk from New York. They play it upbeat, rough with emotion and energy. Influenced by the No Idea back catalogue and a couple of Minneapolis bands I think… (AD)
(Salinas, PO Box 20995, Ferndale, MI 48200)

PRESS GANG – "Your Way" EP

Ugly, acerbic punk rock from Germany.

Imagine if the spit and bile of early BLACK FLAG were mixed with the thud punk of early Killed By Death bands like the MAGGOTS or the SHITDOGS. This shit *kills*. The cover almost looks like a straight edge record so keep your peepers peeled as this one's a monster…sleeper record of the issue! (TB)
(Hardware, PO Box 1646, 49006, Osnabruck, GERMANY)

PRINCESS THUNDERSTORM – EP

Ex-QUEER WÜLF folks do scrappy, lo-fi DIY hardcore. You can imagine a bunch of kids in a field with a generator rocking this shit, or in a shitty basement somewhere. I know there's a whole scene out there of these folks, screen-printing their own shit, playing for 15 cents in a basement, and putting out records that sound like they were recorded for that 15 cents onto a re-used cassette tape. More power to 'em, man, but sounds like shit to me… (TB)
(25th Hour, PO Box 4234, Chattanooga, TN 37405)

PROJECT HOPELESS – "Hit Men Inte Längre Utan Skyddshjälm (2001-2004)" CD

PROJECT HOPELESS has been growing stronger as a band with each passing year through each consistently awesome release. This CD starts off with their *Kalla Javla Samhalle* LP from 2004 which is absolutely relentless hardcore with great Swedish-style shrieking vocals. The CD takes us back from there to their earlier EPs, which are more loose but still every bit as catchy, raging, distorted, and fast. The lyrics are really well thought-out and dig into issues that have been overlooked for quite some time in punk rock. This CD contains 40 tracks on it, running over an hour! The lyrics are translated and the packaging looks really great. Get it if you don't already own the vinyl. Also, check out the newest LP by this band also reviewed this month, total brutality! (WK)
(Bullwhip, bullwhiprecords@yahoo.com)

PROJECT HOPELESS – "Välkommen" LP

UK peace-punk-influenced hardcore from Malmö, Sweden, firing a litany of political attacks against patriarchy, poverty, and consumerism. From these vocal diatribes and tribal patterns, the songs burst into noisy, blasting, full-throttle crust thrash more common to Sweden with high-speed, standard issue screeched/shouted vocal trade-offs. The circle-logo cover displays heavily stippled skulls, gasmasks, factories, and the wasteland, but the thoughtful lyric explanations mark this as sincerity as opposed to out-and-out mimicry. Solid. (KS)
(O. Petersson, Sofiagatan 13, 214 45 Malmö, SWEDEN, www.projecthopeless.tk)

THE PROTON ENERGY PILLS – "Rocket to Tarrawanna" CD

A collection of studio and live recordings from this Australian band from the late '80s. THE PROTON ENERGY PILLS were a hard rock band with a slight psychedelic tinge and sing-songy vocals. It was the beginning of the grunge era, which still isn't easy to look back on from the 21st century with any sense of nostalgia. (CK)
(Bang!, PO Box 166, Santurtzi 48980, Bizkaia, Basque Country, SPAIN, www.bang-records.net)

THE PUBES – "Peat Sounds" CD

This band looks like they want to be the next *Wiggles* with the silly cartoony artwork on the cover and the photos of their dorky-selves in their different colored T-shirts and "wacky" punky hairdos. Musically, they sound like way more of straightforward pop-punk band than I would've guessed. Not overproduced—just four chords and 4/4 beats, like GROOVIE GHOULIES meets ROCK 'N' ROLL ADVENTURE KIDS. The lyrics are really, *really* dumb, though. For example: "Rod Stewart wrote Downtown Train, but I wrote this song so fuck off you shitheads," or "He runs around and jumps on stuff / Wolf Oo-Loo, Wolf Oo-Loo!" I'm sure *they're* having fun... (PC)
(Roadhouse Tunes, 9102 Edwards Dr., St. Louis, MO 63132, www.roadhousetunes.com)

RATTUS – "30th Anniversary of Rattus" CD

A surprisingly kick-ass 22-song collection by one of Finland's (if not the world's) greatest hardcore bands, culled from practice space recordings and live shows dating back as far as 1979 but largely from reunion shows in Germany, Finland and the US from this decade. Covering all ground from their *Fucking Disco* '77 punk, through their classic hardcore era, to their metal-damaged later material, this stuff surprisingly *totally* rocks with good live sound quality. Might be lost on new fans or people unfamiliar with the band, but if you know what blown-out, sped-up versions of classic RATTUS tracks like "Rumia Ruumiita," "Sotahullut," "Miks Haluat Tapella," and "Sodan Tragedia," are going to do for you, then you've already sent your money in to get this. Hell, the 2002 rehearsal studio version of "Taala Tullaan Koulema" (from *Fucking Disco*) and the blazing version of "Maalima Ilman Vihaa" are worth the price alone. Liner notes, pro-CD foil-stamped tray card, unexpectedly, blazingly killer. (KS)
(Black Konflik, No. 59, Lorong 3, TMN Kenanga, 27600 Raub, Pahang, MALAYSIA)

RAUM101 – LP

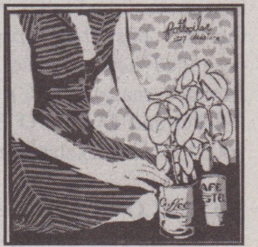
This is actually a one-sided record, so although it's a 12" and plays at 33 rpm, I'm not sure it can strictly be called an LP. Six songs of melodic German punk with an enormous debt of gratitude to the mighty LEATHERFACE. The vocals are a major disappointment though: imagine if you will Billie Joe from GREEN DAY singing BAD RELIGION songs in German. I know. (AM)
(Epistrophy, Postfach 312, 30003 Hanover, GERMANY, www.epistrophy.de)

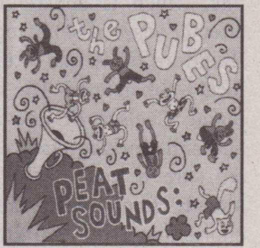
REBELS ADVOCATE – "Consumed by Convention" EP

Bay Area metal/thrash with demented melodic leads, plenty of squeals, and gruff, sufficiently hostile vocals. Despite some solid guitar playing and proficient songwriting, someone here is out of tune the entire EP—not detrimental, but unmistakable; super raw. (BS)
(Buried In Hell, PO Box 163826 Sacramento, CA 95816, buriedinhell@yahoo.com)

RHINO 39 – 2xCD

The complete recordings from 1979–1986 from this LA punk band, most well known for their Dangerhouse





7" from 1979 which features the song "No Compromise." Always in the shadow of the more popular bands of their day, RHINO 39 plugged along and worked hard as others sold out, dropped out, etc. The liner notes are an interesting account of the LA punk scene's formative years and funny little encounters with many soon-to-be celebrities that they encountered throughout their modest existence. (They may be a little bit *too* modest when they dismiss their song "Marry It" as being "fucked up." I thought that was their best song!) Musically though, RHINO 39 never had that distinctive of a sound. If you want to be generous you could say they had an influence on thrash, OC punk, and skate-core a bit; and some of the wackier songs—"Head Cheese" and "Turn Your Head and Cough"—are great fun, but for the most part it's just good-but-not-great SoCal punk rock. What's notable is that although RHINO 39 was never as great a band as their contemporaries, they also never turned as lame as most bands did by the mid-'80s; their Triple X LP from 1986 (included here as disc 2) is some of their strongest material. (PC)
(Nickel and Dime, PO Box 555712, LA, CA 90055, www.nickelanddimerecords.com)

RIOT/CLONE – "Success" CD
Hmm. I am not into this type of music *at all. But* this band aren't worthless dirtbags so I feel kind of obligated not to be a jerk about this, which is apparently their final release after 27 years of being together. They reference Brentford FC in one of the songs, which is my local football team! The song is about how corporate Chelsea FC are and how commercial and anti-working-class football has become. I am sure if you are a fan of this band you already know what they are about—three-chord simplistic working class politi-punk. (LG)
(Dr. Strange, www.drstrange.com)

ROBOCOP 3 – "If the Door Is Locked There's Someone In There" EP
Wow, this is a sloppy, crashing, jangly, careening mess of a li'l record, made more bizarre and delightful by lyrics about living out dreams of *Muppet Movie* living, not being invited to pool parties, and playing magic cards. (AA)
(Thrillhouse, PO Box 460207, San Francisco, CA 94146, www.thrillhouserecords.com)

ROCK, STAR – "Inamorato" CD
Not sure if I see the meaning in releasing a recording that is seven years old just because the principle two people in the band got back together again and reformed said band. That said, *Inamorato* is a nine-track CD that carries a definite mid-'90s DC feel to the songs mixed in with something like SQUIRRELBAIT or another Louisville band. Nothing bad, but nothing really great here either. (JF)
(Black Numbers, www.blacknumbers.com)

RUINER – "Prepare to Be Let Down" LP
This is a telling title for a very short "full-length" (21 minutes) record with too few moments of interest. The vocals are nowhere as exciting as the EP, and the production is pretty thin. The only highlight is in the honesty that comes forth in the vocalist's lyrics. Aside from that, I can't see myself coming back to this. (CC)
(Bridge 9, www.bridge9.com)

SAYYADINA – "Mourning the Unknown" CD
Sweden's SAYYADINA is rooted firmly (and competes well) in world class TERRORIZER/NASUM-level grind, with precision blast-beat drilling, deep growled vocals, and raw speed, but still at points incorporates modern Swedish metallic hardcore influences (naturally, with members of ACCURSED, VICTIMS, and SUNDAY MORNING EINSTEINS in SAYYADINA's lineup) as well as black metal sounds. There's enough song structure, as opposed to flailing blasting, to make hardcore fans put off by the "grind" tag to take notice, and enough sick brutality to appease diehard grindcore freaks. 21 well recorded tracks with somber lyrics and tight musicianship that continually, jaw-droppingly raise the level of intensity from track to track. (KS)
(Sound Pollution, PO Box 17742, Covington, KY 41017, www.sound-pollution.com)

SAW THROAT – "Indestroy" LP
A reissue of the 1989 cult classic Manic Ears release from members of DOOM and SORE THROAT doing an over-40-minute single-song album (coming after SORE THROAT had just dropped a 101-song LP!!), with the song divided into chapters. Ambient at times, this is dark mid-tempo "apocalyptic as apocalyptic gets" stench/crust à la AMEBIX, ANTISECT, or even not to far off from that last really slow NEUROSIS record if someone from DOOM or E.N.T. stepped in on vocals. Reissued with the original poster insert printed as a gatefold sleeve and liner notes. The lyrics here were entirely about Western's society destructive effects on the environment and the bleak future created by industry "progress," and seem oddly and depressingly prophetic with global warming headlines. (KS)
(Skuld, www.skuldreleases.de)

JOHN SCHOOLEY & HIS ONE MAN BAND – "One Man Against the World" CD
This man won't be happy till everybody hates you, you're shitting blood, and your parents are laughing at you—that's how ready he is to bring you down and remind you of the shithole life you're living. Scrappy, inspired, and tragic. There's even a violin on the best song (yes a violin, not a fiddle—at least I like to imagine it is). It's obvious this guy knows his ass from his anus when it comes to blues—you don't see nods to BUKKA WHITE everyday, now do you? (JP)
(Voodoo Rhythm, www.myspace.com/johnschooley)

SECOND OPINION – "650" EP
These young kids from Half Moon Bay have been going at it for quite some time, and this new EP shows why you should pay attention. Despite being recorded a while back, this is by far my favorite release by SECOND OPINION. These guys walk the line between Y2K thrash and early '80s skate-core, combining both styles to create some great songs like "650" and "Jesus Freaks." Good stuff. (CC)
(Cowabunga, 195-D S. Armstrong Way, Upland, CA 91786, www.cowabunga-rex.tk)

SHAPEEN / THE TACHOMETERS – split EP
With a cover photo of some worn Converse sneakers and a picture of band members engaged in beer drinking on the back, I knew I was in for some fun Japanese rock 'n' roll. And of course I wasn't let down; I mean, how could I have been? Have you ever heard a RAMONES-inspired Japanese punk band that doesn't totally rip? THE TACHOMETERS are no exception, and here they belt out three catchy lo-fi tunes similar to the early REGISTRATORS singles. SHAPEEN, on the other hand, slow things down a bit (vocally at least) and reveal a more melodic punk influence mixed with garage trash. Both sides of this EP are equally good, making this a worthwhile split. Good luck finding a copy! (BG)
(Radiator, 1-11-14 Muraoka-higashi, Fujisawa-city, Kanagawa 251-0012, JAPAN, www2.ttcn.ne.jp/radiator-records)

SICK CITY DAGGERS – "Live Fast...Die Psycho" CD
This is some METALLICA-esque metal with melodic vocals. If you're into double kick drums, guitar solos and lyrics about scary things like zombies, this is the record for you. (CK)
(Hairball 8, www.hairball8.com)

SICK-E'S – "Whispers from the Front" EP
Another good—nay *great*—one from Going Underground Records. Is there really some kind of renaissance going on in Bakersfield or is it just a handful of kids

working around the clock to give that impression? At any rate, lazy review of this is it sounds like kids who never heard the SCREAMERS but nonetheless managed to reinvent a quasi-SCREAMERS sound plus whacked-out processed vocals and an adolescent Satanic bent. Put it all together and it spells brilliance. (DD)
(Going Underground, 1822 G Street, Bakersfield, CA 93301, www.punxonly.com)

SICK SICK BIRDS – "Chemical Trains" EP

Oftentimes we reviewers lazily compare bands to other bands from the same region, but I swear to god, before I even knew this band was from Baltimore I thought they sounded like the FUSES, which is a major compliment. Nice layered jangly guitars with driving rhythms and melodic but not saccharine sweet vocals. SICK SICK BIRDS have the added of bonus of a female vocalist in the mix, which creates yet another layer of awesomeness. The first track, "(Revolt with) Perfect Spelling," is the best—a fine balance of post-punk, pop-punk, and plain ol' punk punk, with a pinch of emo. They probably set the standard too high, 'cuz the other tracks don't hold up quite as well. But one great song and three pretty good ones still add up to a winner in my book. (PC)
(Toxic Pop, c/o Mike Riley, 2981 Falls Rd., Baltimore, MD, 21211, www.toxicpoprecords.com)

STELLAR CORPSES – "Respect The Dead" CD

Not quite sure what the definition of "psycho" is these days (as in psychobilly). But these guys proudly proclaim it. Other than the stand-up bass, creepers, and funny haircuts, these guys exhibit no traces of rockabilly or wing. Rather, they produce a pretty straightforward early MISFITS horror-punk sound. Melodic, driving, two guitars...it's actually pretty good. Six tracks of the best psycho has to offer, apparently. (RK)
(Hairball 8, www.hairball8.com)

SUBWAY SECT – "1978 Now" CD

The story of this album boggles the mind: These songs were originally recorded in 1978 for the band's first LP. Somehow the tapes were destroyed and the record was never mixed or released. 29 years later, SECT front-man reassembles the group to record the album again once and for all. Usually when bands rerecord their old material they try to "correct" the so-called limitations imposed on them by the technology of the times (as seen on GANG OF FOUR's recent reworking of their early material *Return the Gift*) and usually detract from the original recordings' charm. Somehow, SUBWAY SECT avoided this pitfall, because *1978 Now* really *does* sound like it was recorded before Thatcher became Prime Minister, and it's every bit as vital as just about anything that actually came out that year. SUBWAY SECT were the secret weapon on THE CLASH's White Riot tour—the band that signaled a direction out of punk's developing 1-2-3-4 uniformity and influenced many of the next decade's "post"-punks. Jagged and jangly, pointed and direct. One can only wonder what punk would look like if only this had come out when it should have. (AM)
(Overground, PO Box 1NW, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE99 1NW, UNITED KINGDOM, overgroundrecords.co.uk)

SUPERBAD – "East River Deathsquad" EP

SUPERBAD the band pre-dates the movie that by the time this rag gets to your hands you'll prolly think "goddd what a bunch of corny assholes, they named their band after some movie," so fuckin' whatevers, get over it. From what I hear, SUPERBAD shares members with FALLING OVER DRUNK and FALL OF THE BASTARDS; if that is true, I'm fooled, because this shit is goin' nuts all over the place. Its like a ride through brutal musicsville…eh well, never mind. This shit rages, it's a non-stop fucking riff-house of blast-beats with funny lyrics and a killer cover. (NE)
($5 ppd US/$8 ppd world: Ragerizer, PO Box 6601, Portland, OR 97228, ragerizerrecords@gmail.com)

SUPERDUDE – "Pothead Punk" CD

I hate novelty records, whether it's disguised as punk—THE TOY DOLLS are just straight-up your granny making a dick of herself at your sister's wedding to the "Birdie Song." I say fuck all unfunny schoolyard humor, I'm five and have just shit the bed novelty crap. Sounds like a bunch of 40-year-old ex-Oi boys sharing their all-down-the-pub-with-Chas-and-Dave un-sense of humor. Fuck off, twats. (SD)
(Ace)

THE TARGET / WATCH OUT! – split LP

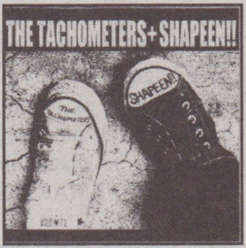
I just can't get into this. Both bands play that ever-saturated style of generic Euro-straight edge hardcore. This turd lacks any sort of life. It's like a goddamn coloring book. Nothing records are the hardest to review. How many ways can you say "This isn't bad but it isn't good"? I mean, there's apparently only one way to say "We were friends until you stabbed me in the back" and "Stay positive" and it's over the same hack-job somewhat fast part (usually in these types of bands it's the drummer's fault for being too half-assed and showy to play an actual fast beat that isn't half-time), gang chorus, sorta fast part again, gang chorus one more time, break, end. Ahhh! Do something different you shitheads! Everything about this record is lazy and it's boring! (JU)
(Cobra/Prügelprinz, no address)

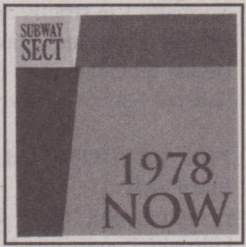
TERROR POP – "Guerilla Warfare"

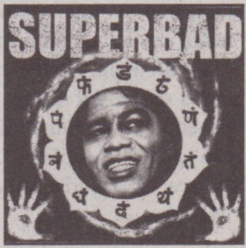
My guess is that this quartet is Swedish. Which would make perfect sense. They combine a trashy rock 'n' roll with the cool, hipster swagger, stylish image, and left political/outlaw bent that INTERNATIONAL NOISE CONSPIRACY do so well. The sign of any good band, of course, is a choice of cover done so well that it sounds like it should be one of theirs. And TERROR POP do that seamlessly with the DAMNED's "Neat Neat Neat" and FLESH FOR LULU's "Laundromat Kat." Their originals sound even better. Nine tracks, 26 glorious minutes. (RK)
(www.terrorpop.nu)

THIEVES AND ASSASSINS – "Martyr Brigade" CD

These guys come on like BAD RELIGION but quickly move into emo core riffing and tempo changes.







Maybe it's the vocal stylings that make this sound a bit copycat, but this has its moments with its flare-ups and heaviness. I like it. (RL)
(Iron Pier, www.ironpier.net)

TIN ARMOR – "A Better Place Than I Have Been" CD

Indie pop meets punk, and sometimes there's no place than I'd rather be. Heartfelt, pouring-it-all-out lyrics, delivered in a nasally MORRISEY style, backed up by jangled guitars rocking it out almost as hard as THE THERMALS. I'm a sucker for this, I can already guarantee myself that I'll be proclaiming this CD as a masterpiece come a very drunken weekend. Did I mention the beautiful packaging to match the bountiful music? If THE HOUSEMARTINS were on No Idea. (SD)
(One Percent, www.onepercentpress.com)

TOTALT JÄVLA MÖRKER/HUMAN WASTE – split EP

Let's start with TOTALT JÄVLA MÖRKER—heavy as fuck, tight as hell, really well recorded without sounding too pro. It's kind of a combo of grinding black metal and punk. This is the fucking shit I love to hear, and Sweden loves to spawn. HUMAN WASTE delivers more of the same unrelenting, breakneck shredding. It's kind of a more rock 'n' rolled-out D-beat. More MOTÖRHEAD than DISCHARGE, ya know? Normally I'm strictly anti-wanky guitar solos, but this record may make a believer out of me. Highly recommended. (AA)
(Wasted Sounds, www.wastedsounds.com)

THE TRADITIONAL FOOLS – "I Got a Baby" EP

Goddamn these beautiful, hyperactive kids with impeccable taste, copping from *Born Innocent*-era RED KROSS, surf music, and any other thing they feel like, and making it their own without giving a fuck how bad they make any bands unfortunate enough to share a bill with them. Now they gotta put out a record that's so good it makes me cry. Whatever happened to community? (DD)
($6 ppd: Chocolate Covered, c/o Michael Pearce, 559 Paris Street, San Francisco, CA 94112)

THE TRASHIES – "Life Sucks Trash Fuck" LP

Bratty, stoopid poppy punk rock with keyboards and catchy tunes. Side two gets arty with a long jam to end the record. THE TRASHIES are (vocally) a more discernable LOS HUEVOS or a less intense MR. CALIFORNIA AND THE STATE POLICE. I am all for stupid lyrics, but these have to be some of the stupidest I have heard in a long time. Am I to believe this is what the punks of the George W. Bush generation are really like: sweat pants wearing science bashers with checking accounts? What happened to just stealing shit you couldn't afford? And yet for some crazy reason, I love this record! It may dumb, but still is fun. Not to be confused with Seattle's THE TRASHIES whom I reviewed two months ago. (CK)
(Bubble Dumb, 663 Doyle Park, Santa Rosa, CA 95405)

TRENCHER – "Lips" CD

This has the most repulsive lo-budget basement D 'n' D horror video fan artwork ever. A collage of bad fantasy novel style art of different body parts lumped on top of each other, culminating in an image of a vagina filled with cartoon brains that is also an eyeball. I would say that the cover art sums up the music—kind of pathetic try-hard nerd "shock" tactics; they are clearly jocking some LOCUST/ARAB ON RADAR dudes and it's a little embarrassing? But maybe you are jocking those dudes too and this would be right up yr alley. Not mine! Thankfully! They call themselves "Casio grind." I wish dudes like this were into THE SCREAMERS rather than mid-'90s boredom core. (LG)
(Southern, www.southern.com)

UTOPIA – CD

Fast, guitar-driven, female-fronted, hell-bent punk/hardcore from Poland, steeped in '80s punk; classic DOA punch and flurried picking meets the grittier early BAD RELIGION-style riffage with clean-sung catchy vocals (vocally melodic, think a rougher GORILLA ANGREB). The guitar playing and chord progressions are impeccable, and a little more throat in the vocal department could put this over the top. Great disc. Look forward to hearing more. (BS)
(Trujaca Fala, PO Box 13, 81 806 Sopot 6, POLAND, www.trujacafala.com)

THE VAPIDS – "The Point Remains the Same" CD

RAMONES-y pop-punk with a driving raw edge. From Hamilton, Ontario, these leather be-jacketed Canucks know how to churn out the three-chord goods, this being their 8th(!) album in their thirteen-year existence. This is a lot harder and faster than most music in this sub-genre; they almost hit HOOKERS/RIVER CITY RAPISTS/REO SPEEDDEALER territory on some tracks. Not bad. (AD)
($15 ppd: The Vapids, 85 Garfield Avenue South, Hamilton, ON, L8M 2S3, CANADA)

VOMIT – "Kate Moss" EP

Disjointed and spastic fast hardcore out of SoCal. Near clean guitar, distorted bass, dry drum sounds work great for their classic sounding tone. "Treachery" delivers merciless riff after riff of full tilt SIEGE worshipping hardcore. Dig it. (BS)
($4 ppd US/$7 ppd world: Give Praise, PO Box 494, Barnstable, MA 02630, www.givepraiserecords.com)

WARKRIME – "Get Loose" LP

These pimply-faced Bay Area punks who have been causing quite a ruckus with many people have produced an entire LP's worth of snot abrasive punk to get right under some folks' fingernails. I will talk about this disc on several levels. First, the artwork—pretty fucking awesome! Cover looks great; nice art direction going on here even though the record says "Not Art" all over the back cover, which I find humorous 'cuz it has Valencia St. gallery hanging potential, OK? The posed insert photo with the SF landscape in the background is great. Second, the music—the first time I saw this band I thought "Fuck, this band can play some fucking rapid, aggressive hardcore that makes the fingers clench." This LP has some of those elements but lacks a bit of that impact. Oh, and shoot whoever put those effects on Brace's vocals—it's barely digestible, nearly ruins it completely for me. Brace ends up sounding robotic. Aside from that, good songs here. Finally, the lyrics—what we have here is the expected "fuck everything" songs that pissed-off punks "traditionally" write about—the "everything and everyone makes us sick" kinda shit that we hear a lot of at *MRR*. My only complaint is the opening track "Urban Problems." Ya know, where you let the world know you got urban problems—for a moment there I think, oh how sad, but when you get to "Woman in the gutter begs and she mutters / Asks for change with a stutter, I wanna gut her / The scum in city hall *[I agree 100% here—fuck folks at city hall 'cuz they do suck!]*, the Chinese at the mall / Got us in these walls, got us by the balls." Now what the fuck are you talking about? Like the homeless don't have problems? She is in a gutter, dude, while you pass her to go to a show, boo fuckin' hoo man. What did Chinese people do to you or any of "da punks?" Using the immigrant as a scapegoat for your "(sub)urban issues" is President Bush style bullshit. Ridiculous ass song here. Finally, most folks have written you guys off as dumb, and we know you aren't, so why play the part? (MS)
(No Way, 3211 Idlewood Avenue, Richmond, VA 23221, www.nowayrecords.com)

WASTED TIME – "No Shore" EP

This record is a furious hell ride into an ugly hardcore Valhalla. I'm so into this it ain't

even funny. Maybe my favorite record of the post-2004 "traditional US Hardcore" tsunami. Not since DEATHREAT has the anger and frustration of the shit hand we've been dealt in this self-destructive world been so accurately captured and put to vinyl. Not that this sounds similar to DEATHREAT, but their records had this way of making my skin crawl and instantly raising the hairs on the back of my neck and this record has the same effect. This is fucking tough as shit, ugly, angry hardcore the way it should be done. (JU)
(Grave Mistake, PO Box 12482 Richmond, VA 23241, www.gravemistakerecords.com)

WHITE FLAME – "American Rudeness" CD

Another lost mid-'70s punk 'n' roll gem gets discovered and put out for our consumption by the illustrious Munster Records. WHITE FLAME is a breath of fresh air, in a way, since instead of aping the VELVET UNDERGROUND or the MC5, they seem to have a broader list of bands from which they drew influence. Consisting of just two guys from Connecticut who started creating songs around 1975, this twelve-track LP was recorded in 1978 just to disappear into obscurity. The music, while always in the proto-punk zone, ranges a lot from Lou Reed or MODERN LOVERS-like poetic rock to the piano-driven, thumb-snapping rock 'n' roll boogie of the COUNT BISHOPS or even Warren Zevon. Sometimes things get a bit weird and I would bet they were listening to ROCKET FROM THE TOMBS and the DEVIANTS a lot back then. Good studio sound quality throughout. Recommended for drinkin' and drug-takin' miscreants who dig high-energy mid-'70s rock, but not advised for those new to the genre. Get the records by the other bands mentioned first. (BG)
(Munster, www.munster-records.com)

WOLFBRIGADE – "Prey To The World" LP

No-frills Swedish crust punk from the masters of the genre. I guess this is their comeback record after their split and it's actually better than their last couple of records, returning to the form of early WOLFPACK records like *Allday Hell*. This is the band (or at least their early incarnation WOLFPACK) that spawned the down-tuned melody-driven hardcore of bands like TRAGEDY and FROM ASHES RISE, and this record is as good as any of that stuff. Heavy shit. (TB)
(Unrest, Suite 239, 10654 82nd Ave., Edmonton, AB, T6E 2A7, CANADA, www.unrestrecords.com)

YOUNG CANADIANS – "AKA The K-Tels" LP

As a young KALX DJ back in the early-to-mid-1980s, I heard, and quickly latched onto a track called "Hawaii" by this band. It was a great song, catchy as all fuckin' hell, and the opening lyrics are "Let's go to fucking Hawaii, get drunk in the sun." Are you kidding me? How could you *not* love it? Anyway, I never knew much else about YOUNG CANADIANS. I couldn't say that I knew any of their other songs. I didn't know that they originally had been known as THE K-TELS. I was, and still am, a bit of a record collector. Their *Hawaii* 12" EP was one that I looked for years and years. Just this year I finally landed it on eBay. Do yourself the favor of not having to exist in misery all those years as I had to do—make an effort to find this record. It's catchy Canadian punk rock from the late 1970s and early 1980s. They had a couple of 12" EPs and, apparently, a 7" that came with the first pressing of their *Hawaii* EP. This has most (or all) of these studio tracks, plus a few live ones. They were a catchy band and true to the time. (KK)
(Lady Kinky Karrot, ladykinkykarrot@yahoo.com)

YOUNG WASTENERS – "We Got Ways" LP

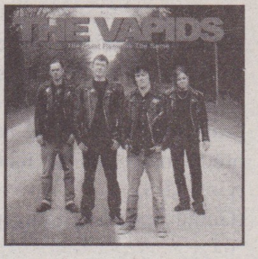
At last, a reissue of the YOUNG WASTENERS' hard-to-find LP, this time on Hjernespind. This band, along with AMDI PETERSEN'S ARME, were sort of responsible for kicking off the last few years' wave of Copenhagen worship with their evocative and authentic West Coast punk—and to be honest, few of the bands that followed in their wake managed to fully live up to their promise. Don't get me wrong, I do love NO HOPE FOR THE KIDS and GORILLA ANGREB, but this record was/is something else. As an added benefit, the artwork on this reissue looks even better than on the original. As always, it's definitely retro, but it's retro done right. (AM)
(Hjernespind, PO Box 505, 2200 Copenhagen N, DENMARK, www.hjernespind.com)

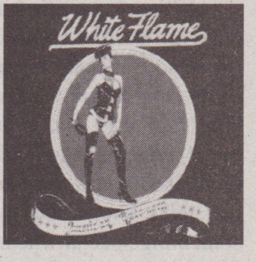
V/A – "Axis of Wolves" CD

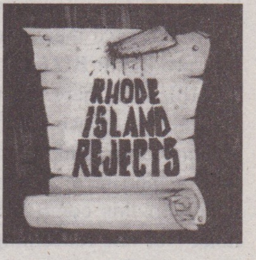
Just when I'm beginning to believe that nothing good is released on CD, I get this awesome three-way international split featuring NIGHTMARE, BURIAL, and CRUDE. All of the bands are recorded in a very nicely lo-fi way that makes them sound super raw and urgent. It starts with the incredible blazing hardcore of Japan's NIGHTMARE, followed by Germany's BURIAL, who deliver some punchy and fierce hardcore punk. Last but not least is Japan's CRUDE, unleashing some totally feral cacophonous punk that is contagious in its frenzy. It's a shredding little split, start to finish. Get it. (AA)
(HG:Fact, www.interq.or.jp/japan/hgfact/)

V/A – "Eat Shit: An Arizona Underground Compilation" LP

Aside from CANCER BRIDES' incessant, driving POISON IDEA-worship with Abel "Jerry-A" on vokills and his other capable revivalist cohorts, this is pretty much a comp of sub-prime awkwardness, but there are a few moments... LINE OF FIRE launch a time capsule of lost '90s punk tense breakdowns and quick time-changes, with a lot street punk clichés coming at you "fuck you." Shit's just crazy. Nope. SMELLS LIKE DRUNK rocks some compelling tunes about party injuries, holding your nuts; there's some interesting creative riffery and some crust waltzs. The CONFLICT RESOLUTION tracks, despite their standout production quality, tightness, and speed, kept hitting with rhymin' vocal delivery and that hippity-hoppity drum break down stuff; they are pretty sure this recording makes you their bitch and they have a "fuck you" song too. STRIPPER KILLERS play more rock-rooted pop-punk-sounding tunes, lyrics turn to contemporary hot button issues like getting stabbed in the back and breaking up. GENERAL







WARNING reveal that cartoonish later MDC worship is somehow still alive and well; "Bomb the KKK" will definitely meet compromised expectations and "Let's Get Drunk" pretty much sets the tone for some crazy partying. (BS)
(Going Ape Shit, goingapeshit@cox.net)

V/A – "…For Blood" CD

Tribute for Jason Mashburn from the DEMON CITY WRECKERS, who passed away last year. It's a nice gesture by the guy's friends—LEFT FOR DEAD, STITCH HOPELESS AND THE SEA LEGS, KOFFIN KATS, etc.—but the music is nuthin' to write home about. Thugish psychobilly music just doesn't ring my chimes I'm afraid, and that's what you have in spades on this disc. (TB)
(Hairball 8, www.hairball8.com)

V/A – "Land of Misfit Bands" CD

When I was growing up, there was this club in Worcester, Massachusetts called the Espresso Bar that played host to all the super shitty "hardcore" bands. You know, all that crap that was really just nu-metal and rap metal, yet somehow all these yokel kooks thought this was the underground that everyone talks about and that they were part of something special when in reality it was just a feeble collection of your typical beardo, trucker hat, PBR swillin, it's cool to dress with a "country" twist losers who couldn't write a "song" to save their lives. Keep in mind this was pre-LIMP BIZKIT. Though I did see the TEMPLARS there. In fact STAIND were a staple of that place before they fooled a bigger audience into thinking they were more worthy than a mop at a 25-cent peep-show. All the bands on this comp remind me of that shithole. Not one redeeming moment through all 20 tracks. This is not punk, in any way, shape, or form. I'm sure I could do a much better (and funnier) job ripping this disc to shreds, I just don't wanna waste the time. I owe ya'll one! Show me the way to the golden fucking pancake! (JU)
(Round 13, www.round13records.net)

V/A – "Making Children's Songs a Threat Again!" LP

This beautifully packaged album describes itself as a comp "About, and for, children." A pretty open-ended concept that results in an interesting mish-mash of a record: spoken word (*en français*), folk tunes, emo, grind, brutal thrash, grind and brutal thrash with children singing(!), etc. My favorite songs are from Poland's STRACONY (a raw post-punk track) and Holland's BETERCORE (raging emo meets peace-punk?), but that's just my jam. Even better than the record itself is the packaging and the inserts. The screen-print-looking cover is held in back with a safety pin (hopefully an intentional symbol of punk/baby unity) and the twine-bound lyric book contains handmade art and translations from the non-English bits into English. And there's a well-done zine-style booklet containing interesting interviews with punk parents…would've made a good *MRR* article! Anyway, I like this a lot. One of those rare instances where you feel like you had your mind opened up a bit by a punk record. And the effort put into this is highly commendable. (PC)
(Guerilla Shooting, Germain et Sylvie, 4 rue du Verdier, 81150 Marssac-sur-Tarn, FRANCE)

V/A – "Rhode Island Rejects" CD

Lots of metally punk on this comp. with quite a few novelty songs. Titles like "Worthless Cunt," "Buckets Of Sluts' Guts," and "Snuff Porn Till Dawn" make this creepy at best. Street and novelty hardcore for the most part. (RL)
(Reject)

V/A – "Teriyaki Suplexxx" CD

Billing itself as "a 2007 snapshot of the Japanese Underground," the 22 bands on here cast a pretty wide net—from the syrupy girl garage pop of THE PORTUGAL JAPAN, MIKA BOMB, and THE PRAMBATH, to the POP WILL EAT ITSELF-styled dance-rock of ELECTRIC EEL SHOCK, near hip-hop dance remixed JEAN PAUL YAMAMOTO and '90s radio-friendly modern rock alternative BIRTHDAY SUITS (whose song, written months ago, weirdly, is called "Twin Cities Bridge Is Falling Down"—yikes!), to a healthy chunk of blown-out garage rock (familiar faces here—JET BOYS, DAS BOOT, and a couple cool bands I've never heard of called ROCKET JACK VADERS and ED WOODS, who mine the same influences as FLAT DUO JETS), a few tracks of modernized rockabilly, straight-up pop-punk, to some fucked-up acoustic song that sounds like, I dunno, a drunk BARNEY THE DINOSAUR singing in Japanese, and plenty of freak-out SYSTEM OF A DOWN/SCHLONG/ZAPPA-styled quirk rock (DYNAMITE CLUB, MONG HANG, PANIC SMILE). Like the *Teriyaki Asthma* comps of the '90s, the problem is by offering a lot of hit-or-miss musical experimentation and "something for everyone," everyone has to keep their hand on the fast-forward button. Still, as billed, a neat "limited to 1000" snapshot of some of the wilder sides of the Japanese underground scene. (KS)
(Geykido Comet, www.gcrecords.com)

V/A – "Twin Cities Hardcore 2007" EP

The Twin Cities are letting the rest of the world know about their new bands. This comp features DIOS MIO, IN DEFENCE, QUESTION, USELESS WOODEN TOYS, 27 SHOTS, AGENDA, COMPLETE WASTE, and PANDEMONIUM (not the old Dutch band). Various styles of hardcore punk that will appeal to many tastes and preferences. Overall a really cool comp with great DIY spirit. (MS)
($4 ppd US/$7 ppd World: Give Praise, PO Box 494, Barnstable, MA 02630, www.givepraiserecords.com)

V/A – "United States of Hardcore" CD

This comp is an answer to that age old question "Where's the beef?" Beefy riffs, gruff-as-hell vocals, and basketball jerseys galore. The title of the first track says it all—"Thugcore." Highlights include NO REDEEMING SOCIAL VALUE's appropriation of MADBALL's *Colossal Man* into Britney Spears is a skinhead. NEGLECT, NORTH SIDE KINGS (you know, the dude who knocked out DANZIG!), and BLOOD IN BLOOD OUT's cover of KILLING TIME's "Cheap Thrills." 35 pulverizing tracks by 35 bands. (JU)
(Hate Core, PMB 187, 1075 Broad Ripple Ave, Indianapolis, IN 46220)

V/A – "Whirlyball" EP

Chunklet Magazine decided to put out a single featuring four, at the very least, mildly popular Atlanta bands, sell it in town at Criminal Records, and utilize the piece of wax as a ticket to get into a show that happened in the beginning of June 2007 at the Whirlyball bumper-car track. Personally I'm all for innovative and new uses for records, and this sounds like a consumer-friendly deal, but I already get annoyed when I have to stand around at a show after I purchase whatever it is I thought I needed at the merch table and hope I don't fucking drop the thing in a pile of loogies and beer. Forget actually bringing the thing to a show. I'm sure it all worked out for everyone though and they had a great time. The ticket kicks off with an infectious monotone-voiced hand clapper "Blue Ruse" by THE SELMANAIRES. DEERHUNTER plays a noisy pop single as the second A-side bit. The B-side features THE CARBONAS doing a killer version of HUBBLE BUBBLE's "Look Around (I Was So Upset)," and the whole thing finishes with the whiny "Nestle In My Boobies" by THE COATHANGERS who definitely have a knack for annoying yet somewhat charming songs. (AL)
(Chunklet, www.chunklet.com)

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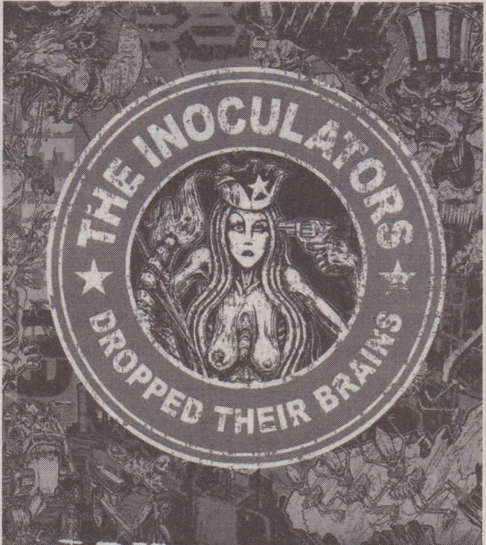

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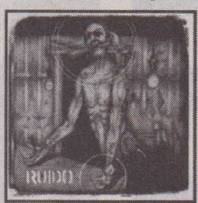

Ruido s/t LP

Ruido in the "early days" when they were a dual-vocal band with equal parts grind, crust and straight ahead hardcore. Songs in Spanish and English including covers of Agnostic Front, 7 Seconds and Fartz. (on Multi-colored vinyl)

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DEMOS

Send demos and CD-Rs to: MRR attn: Demos, PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146. Please provide a postpaid price and a mailing address with your demo! Reviews by Justin Briggs and Erin Yanke.

ABIGAIL and **EFFIGY** have a split live cassette release but out by our Malaysian friends...thanks! EFFIGY was recorded March 4, 2007, and ABIGAIL was recorded February 24, 2007. In general EFFIGY is fast and crusty, with total metal guitar solos all over the place! ABIGAIL seems to bring a more low down and dirty hard rock influence to their crust attack, crunchier guitar metal solos than EFFIGY. The ABIGAIL vocals get lost a bit more in the live recording than EFFIGY's do, but really for live performances this rips the roof off of anything I've heard anyone capture here in ol' America in a long fucking time. Awesome! (Erin) (18-song cassette, no lyrics included. c/o Black Konflik Records, No 59, Lorong 3, TMN Kenanga, 27600 Raub, Pahang, Malaysia, blastpunksdistro@yahoo.com)

The **BLEACH BOYS** are a band of thrashers from Texas who are whipping out some righteously punked-the-fuck-out, '70s-rock-influenced surf music. This is some pretty crazy shit. If you're into any flavor of the early '80s skate punk, you'll prolly like this too. For the most part though this is straight-up instrumental surf music, albeit at a hyper speed. These dudes are great musicians. I'm into it. (4-song cassette, no lyrics (no vocals). Gnarly Slaughter, 1119 Frame St., Denton, TX 76209) (Justin)

DEAD OF NIGHT have a two-track demo of primitive slower-paced metal that, unlike a lot of the crap that comes in via the demo bins, has just enough of a "punk" edge to make it into the review pages. The CELTIC FROST influence here is unmistakable. The light of Tom G's gray, sunken cheekbones shines alive and well in the black soul of this Nanuet, NY band. The songs are of the slower variety and are very well crafted and well played. This is gonna get a lot of play in my corner of the Maxi-pad. Cool. (2-song CD, no lyrics included, $2 ppd: 7 Jerrys Avenue, Nanuet, NY 10954, xbriandx@hotmail.com) (Justin)

DEAD STARE plays dark hardcore that keeps an equal balance between the two paces of slogging through molassas with the teeth bared, and running from the cops while on speed. The vocals are shouted and don't change too much when the music does. Solid and fun. (Erin) (9-song cassette, no lyrics included. 1003 S. Puget Sound Avenue, Tacoma, WA 98405, deadstareforlife666@gmail.com)

Wisconsin's **DEEP SHIT** play a strange form of the power-violence/grind sound that has more in common with MAN IS THE BASTARD's weirdness than some of the other acts currently paying homage to this shit. Two vocalist trade off the duties—the painful-shit grunter guy and the screechy pay-the-fee-to-cross-my-bridge troll guy. This is weird shit, but I like it. (9-song cassette, lyrics included. 216 Schley Pass, Madison, WI 53703) (Justin)

EXTREME NOISE TERROR brought us grindcore. Not alone, but they helped push hardcore over that ledge, for sure. This is a sample of their releases, and a great place to start if you're unfamiliar and interested. Songs are taken from releases that range from 1991 to 2004: *The Peel Sessions*, *Phonophobia*, *Rretrobution*, *Hatred and the Filth*, *Radioactive*, and *Being and Nothing*. (Erin) (22-song cassette, some lyrics included. c/o Black Konflik Records, No 59, Lorong 3, TMN Kenanga, 27600 Raub, Pahang, Malaysia, blastpunksdistro@yahoo.com)

ICON GALLERY mixes together a bunch of styles, to good effect. The music is mid-paced and sometimes breaks into quirky moments or more full-on rocker style. The vocals mix up, belting it out singing with some darker speak singing. It's got a gothic tinge that I can't quite place, and that doesn't dillute their rage. Good stuff. (Erin) (4-song cassette or CD, no lyrics included. $3 ppd: 48 Mayflower Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15206, gallery.icon@gmail.com)

Boston's **LIBYANS** play fairly basic hardcore punk that volleys between fast '80s styled hardcore and really fast pop-punk with snotty female vox. Not too shabby. This drummer is great! (5-song cassette, no lyrics included. $2 ppd: 5 Myrtle St., Somerville, MA 02145) (Justin)

LIVING IN DARKNESS from Toronto play creeping, metallic "hardcore" fairly similar to their Cannuck brethren CURSED. I don't really know what to call this kind of shit cause it ain't metal and it ain't hardcore. It's heavy, it's angry, aggressive, and at times pretty fucking fast. Not a bad recording for a demo either. (8-song CD, no lyrics included. 258 Markham St., Toronto, ON M6J 2G6, CANADA) (Justin)

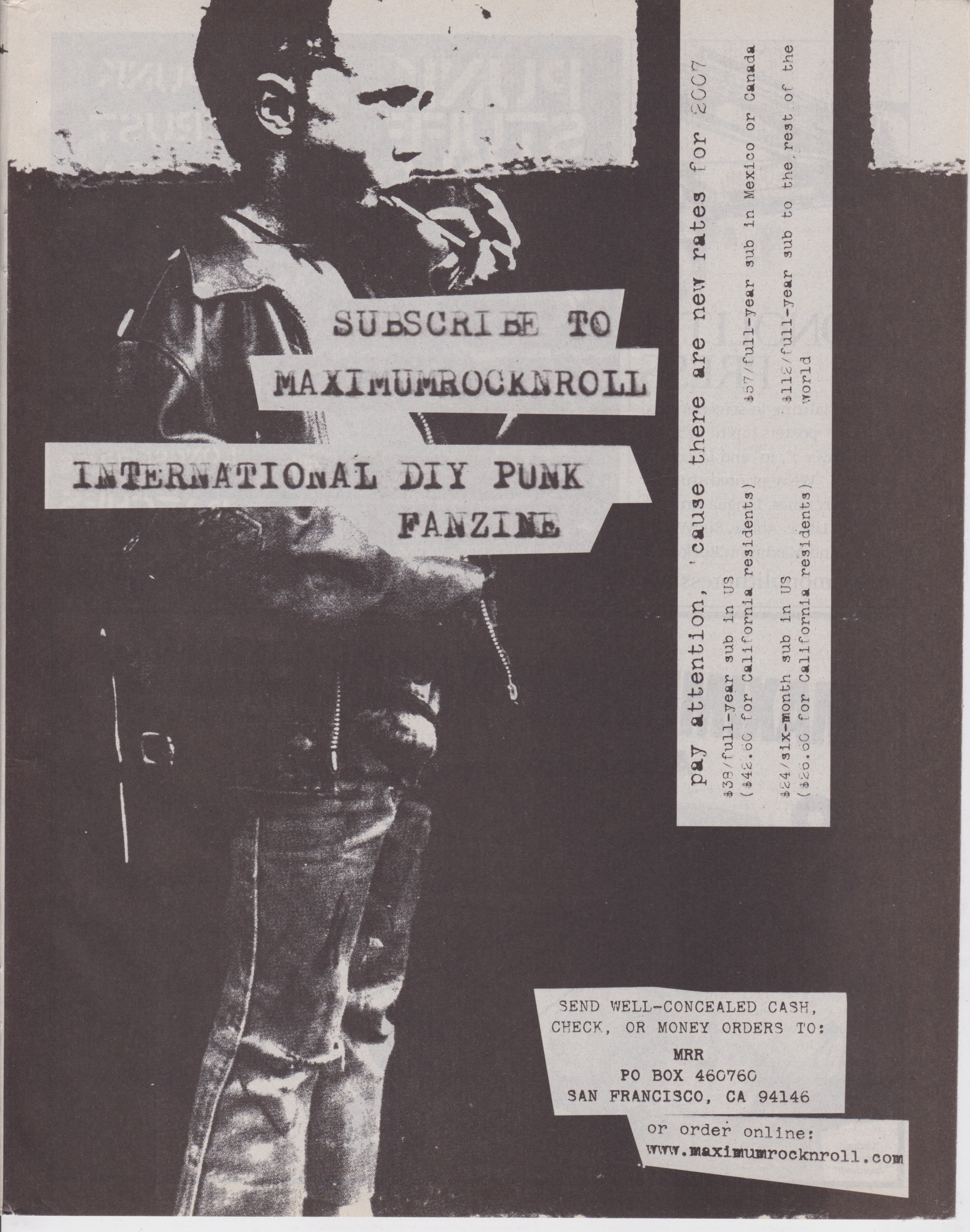
Fast thrashing hardcore is the name of the game for Copenhagen, Denmark's **RIPPING HEADACHE**. I assumed this would be a thrash metal or grind band from the look of it but it's actually pretty damn cool, competently played modern thrash. I dig it! (12-song cassette, no lyrics included. myspace.com/martinmosh) (Justin)

SEX CHANGE hails from somewhere in this tanned, ammonia-reeking wasteland most people know as Califórnia. There is a short write-up about how this band makes no sense. I whole-heartedly agree. What you get is jangly guitars and vocals with somewhat of an Ian Curtis type tortured feel over mostly slow songs that occasionally pick up the pace to a fast bouncy punk level. Not an easy listen to say the least but it's got something cool to it that almost makes it easier to wrap my head around. (6-song CD, no lyrics included. sexchange@inbox.com) (Justin)

STARLA! UBIQUITOUS plays acoustic guitar and sings about politics, traveling, hope, love, and bicycles. The really charming thing about this tape is her in-between song laughing with friends, and other humanity and goofiness not usually brought to the singer/songwriter realm. Thanks. (Erin) (8-song cassette or CD, lyrics included. $3 ppd or trade: c/o Sharpie Fumes Collective, PO Box 31224, Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3K 5Y1, Canada)

VIVIAN GIRLS play poppy yet sad songs, mid-paced and harmonious. They're like a lo-fi HEAVENLY. Then they bust into some faster thing for a second, but it's gone before it's understandable. They cover "Telepathic Love," and it sounds romantic than THE WIPERS usually sound. (Erin) (6-song CD, no lyrics included. 228 Hamilton Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901)

Wow, this **WHITE LOAD** demo was a bit of a surprise—from the Providence address and the packaging, I thought this would be some artsy fartsy poo-poo. Well, I guess it is pretty "arty" in a sense. The same way that HOMOSTUPIDS is arty. Totally messy, fast, stupid music. Not unlike that band of numbskulls I just mentioned and maybe someone like BEHEAD THE PROPHET N.L.S.L. (10-song CD, no lyrics included. $1 ppd: 55 Vernon Street, Apt. 1, Providence, RI 02903) (Justin)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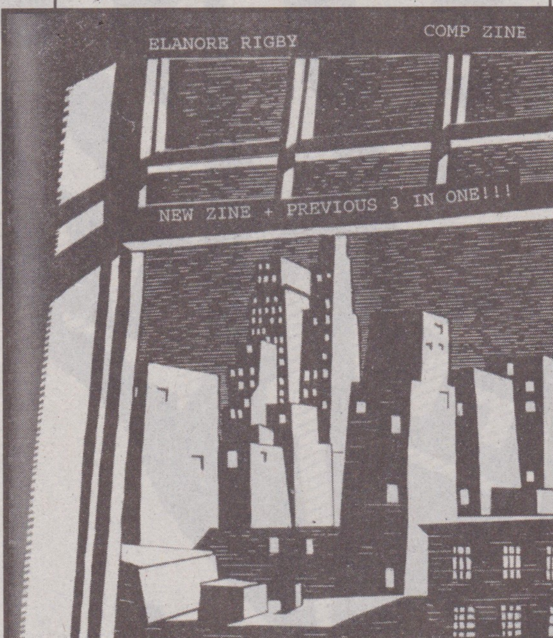
ZINES

Send zines for review to: MRR, PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146. Please include the following info on a separate piece of paper with your zine: postpaid price, international price, do you take trades?, size, copied or printed?, number of pages, language, mailing address, website address, email address.

Reviews by:
(AA) Ariel Awesome
(JB) Julia Booze
(PC) Paul Curran
(DH) Damian Harris
(CH) Cassie Harwood
(CS) Chris Hubbard
(NM) Nick Mangel
(JM) Jeff Mason
(MP) Mason Pince
(CR) Casey Ress
(AS) Andy Shoup

AGRICOLA ST. ZINE #1 / $1
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 8 pgs
How do you think you'd fare given two hours to make a zine for a zine challenge? Candace did impressively well. She gives us a personal account of witnessing a shooting, taking a look at the frustration people often face dealing with the police. She also gives a very astute (albeit brief) dissection of gun violence and its causes. All in eight pages. Nice. (AA)
Candace / 2453 Agricola St. / Halifax NS / B3K 4CI / CANADA

A MURDER OF CROWS: FOR SOCIAL WAR AND THE SUBVERSION OF DAILY LIFE #2 / $3
8.5 x 11 – printed – 56 pgs
This is one of those holier-than-thou "anarchist" publications that advocates everyday revolution, yet criticizes every movement that falls short of bringing down the entire capitalist system in one fell swoop. Take their article, "The Harvest of Dead Elephants," which is a critique on the animal liberation movement. Although many of their points are valid, such as the assessment that standing outside vivisection labs holding signs is next to worthless or buying cruelty-free shampoo still supports capitalism, they went on to critique the Animal Liberation Front and other direct action groups, which have done more for animal and human liberation than any open dialog on anarchist theory ever did. They have no trouble finding faults in every aspect of the animal rights movement, yet they offer nothing in return but empty calls to battle such as, "Revolution begins with each of us... We must decide our own future so that no one else will be able to," or "if we see domination and exploitation everywhere, we must not limit ourselves; we must attack it everywhere it is found." I don't see the point in critiquing a group or movement that has chosen a single angle to concentrate its attack on the system. There are so many fronts to fight on that we cannot afford to obsess over fault in the minutia. From reading this article, I'm left to believe that sitting behind a desk typing up corporate-style cover letters (which I received with the magazine) and charging a $3 cover price so that you can get the mag printed on a press with a color cover is doing more to fight



capitalism than burning down a fur farm. I'm not convinced that the editors are actual revolutionaries, but intellectuals sitting around dreaming up the most radical rhetoric possible—so radical in fact that there is actually no way to implement it. This type of bickering and infighting is the reason why the Right is so strong, while the Left is weak and the anarchists weaker. (DH)
PO Box 20442 / Seattle, WA 98102
www.geocities.com/amurderofcrows1 / amurderofcrows1@yahoo.com

A STUPID LOOK ON LIFE / $2?
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 40 pgs
A graf mag. This zine is almost entirely black and white flicks of public art and street scenes from around California. Pieces, wheat pastes, tags, dead animals, burnt houses, and passed out drunks. As you can infer from the title, the editor is kind of a nihilist, but he takes good pictures. (DH)
Anthony G. / 10101 Rincon Ave / Pacoima, CA 91331
sabbathone@hotmail.com

BLACK LESBIAN PRESIDENT #3 / $?
8 x 5.75 – printed – 48 pgs
Is the UK the land of quality zines? Never been across the pond meself, but it seems like the folks over there really put in a lot of effort to produce publications worth reading. *Black Lesbian President*, despite the 'oribble name, delivers some well-conceived interviews with End of a Year, Gunrack, Mose Giganticus, Yo Man Go!, and a few more, along with a handful of brief "rant"-type pieces, reviews, and an article on the (Young) Pioneers. Layout is nice, there are some really cool photos, and the Minutemen-themed titles tie everything together nicely. (CS)
14 Spring Gardens / Terrace, Cardiff / CF24 1QX / UK

CHUMPIRE #189 and #198 / free w/ stamp
8.5 x 11 – copied – 4 pgs/1 pg
My first question is, where the hell are issues #190-197? Whatever; by the time you get this and send GK your zero dollars and a stamp, he'll be on to #257 and there won't be much different about that issue: a short-ass zine printed on some weird-ass paper (#198's on sparkly gold and nearly unreadable) with one sentence record reviews and half-baked mus-

ings on the world at large. In this digital age, it's nice to see that some people still go to great, though unnecessary, lengths to put in their two cents' (or less) worth on a format with some life in it. Viva *Chumpire*! (PC)
GK / 1119 Florence St. / Lebanon, PA 17042
chumpire@gmail.com

CLENCH #9 / FREE in person, stamps through mail
8 x 11 – copied – 20 pgs
I love the way Phil Knowles writes about music. He has the same earnest appreciation and enthusiasm that someone who just started listening to hardcore has, except he has maintained it for years. His writing is clear and concise, and the layout harkens the same. Sometimes Phil gets a little out of hand with his writing, for instance, when he refers to Bad Brains' *Pay to Cum* 7" as "whipping through songs that ran wild on the decks of glorious ships, cutting through new oceans on distant planets." I forgive him for that because he's talking about *that* record—and because he seems so giddy and genuine. Topics for this zine include several big pieces on Urban Waste (including interview with Johnny Waste), Mad at the World Record's Daniel Skibra, Wendy Eager of *Guillotine* zine, and Armed Citizens interview. This zine is thoroughly researched and comprehensive! Recommended. (MJ)
Phil Knowles / 240 Spring Hill Dr. #210 / Roselle, IL 60172-2470
pizzachew@hotmail.com

DOLL #241 / $?
8.5 x 10 – printed – 136 pages – Japanese
I don't feel like I can really do this zine justice being that I can't speak Japanese. But to me it looks like a more mainstream *Maximum Rocknroll*. The cool thing about this magazine is that there is a shit ton of pictures and lots of different things to look at. This issue features Wolf Brigade, Colored Ricemen, Neurosis, Bad Religion, and Noise. (MP)
www.doll-mag.co.jp

ELEANOR RIGBY #1-3 / $?
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 48 pgs
Personal rants by a young woman in Michigan—main topic: dealing with mental illness and various semi-typical frustrations, but more ranting than thoughtful discourse. For some, not for others I guess… Inspirational musical references head each page. As I read, all I could think was this, "Have you ever realized you must love yourself, if you don't, how can you love anybo-dy else?" I hope the situation improves. (DS)
CVG / 811 Veto Street NW / Grand Rapids, MI 49504

¡ELEPHANT SHOE! / $1.25 plus shipping
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 28 pgs
Most of this zine is comprised of interviews and short biographies of various activists, artists, pirates, and ninjas taken from other sources. Rather than express herself in her own words, the editor draws upon the words of others. The most notable feature of this zine is the centerfold, which is an art piece entitled "Separate Pieces." It is the cleverest item in the zine, critiquing the assumption that peace will prevail through conversion and/or coercion. (DH)
Catherine Hong Le / 5106 E Ryals Ln / Orange, CA 92869
catherinehongle@gmail.com

FAKE LIFE #3 / $1.50 or trade
6.5 x 8 – copied – 40 pgs
I doubt you're gonna find a better look at punk (or whatever) shows in North Florida dive bars—cinder-block structures across from trailer parks that make hipster dive bars seem like the Ritz fucking Carlton. "[S]ome bastard pissed on my shoe which wouldn't a [sic] been so bad except I [sic] wearing flip flops." A show at an all-ages space is also reviewed, as are shitty demos. The editor offers constructive criticism to these rad bands with disappointing self-releases. The interview with the She-He-He's is pretty good, would've been better if Rabbit didn't crap out after transcribing ten minutes of it. Even the sketchy parts are decent. A black lady writes that white people need to reclaim white pride from racists. While not something I'm enthused about, it makes more sense in the context of her critique of white folks' "colorblind" ideology, where the dominant group would rather pretend there are no differences than deal with the legacy of a racist society. Another sketchy part is the interview with an ex-punk rocker who does USO tours now, entertaining American troops in the Middle East. The guy compares the troops to cops, saying you don't hate cops when they just enforce the law, right? The editor asks appropriate questions but doesn't attack these ridiculous responses. This zine is sloppy and trashy. Maybe I just brewed my tea too strong, but sitting here now I think it's pretty good. It's not dull or generic and the price is fair. There are zine reviews and no ads. (JM)
Mike / 5666 Split Oak Lane / Tallahassee, Fl 32303
gomek@comcast.net

GUERRILLA CRAFTFARE #2
4.25 x 5.5 – copied – 36 pgs
You know how cookbooks are made? They gotta have twenty different people try out the recipes and see if they can be followed, some while drunk or without all the proper portions and some with beards and headsets on? If this here is about crafts for people to try out, I just want to know if the laborer of this zine actually thinks the instructions make sense. There's some good ideas though. I never thought about making my own hangers or a skirt guard for my bike. There's a vibe in here of all around cuteness, which doesn't carry it all the way through but for its own sake is like, hella tiny kids with pigtails and giant cursive that falls off the page. (JB)
2615 N. Dewey / OKC, OK 73103

HUB CITY OUT OF THE BASEMENT #3 / $?
8.5 x 5.5 – copied – 28 pgs
This is the second issue of this New Brunswick, New Jersey-centric zine that I've reviewed for *MRR*. This installment consists almost entirely of an interview with local hardcore band Seasick. I won't spoil the piece

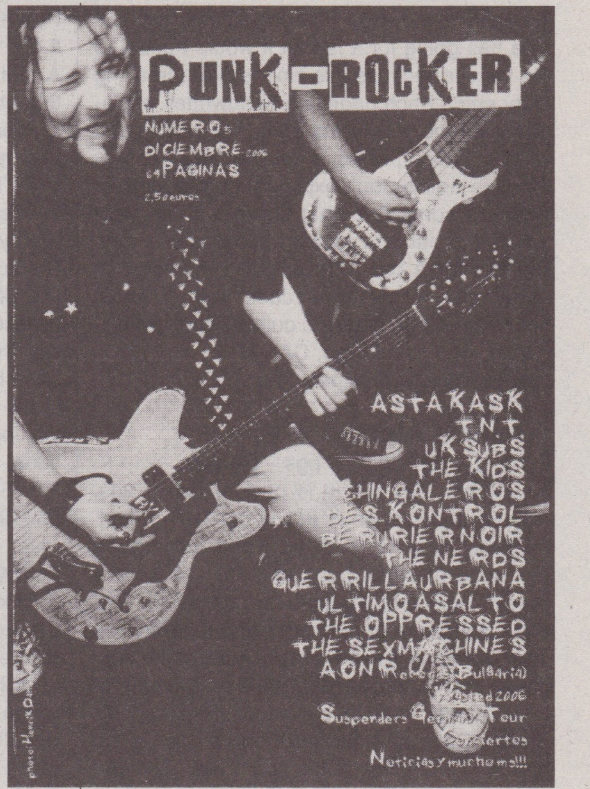
('cause then there'd be pretty much no reason to pick this up) but it's a good read and manages to cover a fair amount of interesting topics. *Hub City* is a little sparse in the art department, but, um, I guess at least it's legible. As before, nice job. (CS)
PO Box 1561 / New Brunswick, NJ 08903
jarrett_d_@hotmail.com

HUMANBEING LAWNMOWER #1 / $4 US, $5 World
8.5 x 7 – printed – 64 pgs
Visually pleasing fanzine outta New York; comic abound, including some on downtown landmarks CBGBs and the Mars Bar. The interviews—with Jeff Magnum (Dead Boys), DC Snipers, Paul Mahern (Zero Boys), John Holmstrom (*Punk* magazine), the Baby Shakes, the Raunch Hands—and reviews are a little heavy on the filler, but the excitement is there and altogether this is a fine debut issue. Lookin' forward two #2 and beyond! (CS)
28-15 34th Street #1I / Astoria, NY 11103
thehumanbeinglawnmower@gmail.com

IF DEATH COMES #4/ $2 or trade
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 24 pgs
If Death Comes is an intimate personal zine from Halifax, some of it painstakingly typed on a typewriter and some of it hand-written on lined paper. The stories read naturally. As I was reading it, I felt as if we were old friends with common points of reference. We had a mutual understanding of the world of train yards, crowded punk houses, and rainy towns. No explanations were needed, no bragging, no sense of self-importance. It was short and sweet. (DH)
Sharpie Fumes Collective / PO Box 31224 / Halifax, NS B3K 5Y1

THE INNER SWINE vol. 13, #2 / $2
5.5 x 8 – copied – 64 pgs
First off, this zine has nothing to do with punk. It reminds me of the last Bukowksi novel, in that there are some good lines but a lot of pointless crap to wade through to get to them. Further, this is longer than the last Bukowski novel, with fewer good lines, which aren't as good. I wouldn't call it terrible, but "all filler, no killer" seems a reasonable review. The editor has logorrhea (uh, in volume, not coherence) and discusses his philosophies, which focus on his self-centered nature. If you've liked it in the past, this is more of the same, and there's lots to read for the cash. Otherwise your two bucks could be better invested many other places. (JM)
PO Box 3024 / Hoboken, NJ 07030
mreditor@innerswine.com

MINDLESS MUTANT #3 / $?
8.5 x 11 – copied – 48 pgs
Within two pages of this zine I already had a bad taste in my mouth. "I'm not saying write your own zine because it's not for everyone, just like I would never encourage you to start a band." What kind of shit is that? Everyone that reads this zine please disregard this statement. Start your own band. Start your own zine. Contribute in anyway that you can. Then he goes on to complain about how expensive X watches are going to be in the future. Who the fuck cares? But don't give up, this zine has some worthwhile parts, like a story about his experience working for the city cleaning up shit. A very informative California scene report that covers everything from hardcore to pop punk, and interviews with three well established hardcore bands (Chronic Seizure, Career Suicide, and Coke Bust). This zine was not for me but it might be for you. (MP)
Matt Roland / 3108 98th St. East / Highland IN 46322



MIX TAPERS DO IT BETTER #1 / Free
8.5 x 5.5 – copied – 20 pgs
In a world of blogs and iPods, I can't think of anything more anachronistic than a zine about mix tapes. I have to say though it's pretty damn great. Karen offers tips, suggestions, and reasons why making mix tapes is important. Reading her descriptions of tapes she's made or received reminded me of the thrill I used to get, carefully but sloppily compiling just the right songs to communicate my feelings to friends. If I had something that played tapes I'd make a friend a mix tape right now! (CR)
Karen H / 49 Winterhalder Dr. / Zeeland, MI 49464
karen@thedaac.org

MOUNTZA #1 / 4 Euros ppd
8.5 x 11 – printed – 54 pgs – Greek/English
Wow, a fucking hot-looking zine based in Greece that is both in Greek and, lucky for me, English. On these very nicely laid-out pages are interviews with REGULATIONS, FELIX HAVOC, FUCKED UP, DEAN DIRG, along with the standard assortment of columns, reviews, tour diaries, and photos. Hope to see regular installments from this great new zine. (AA)
mountzazine@yahoo.com

ONWARD FITNESS SOLDIER #2 / $?
8.5 x 5.5 – copied – 20 pgs
Rather than a regular zine, this is actually a CD released by the author in zine packaging. The CD really isn't good; it's not punk, it's acoustic indie shit, and some of the lyrics are

seriously annoying. The only thing that this zine has going for it is that it would appeal to the voyeur because this zine is like a freaking diary entry. Each page is a handwritten explanation for the reason the song was written and what it is about, which is cool because most of the time artists don't explain their reasons for writing a song. But what sucks is that I kept thinking about how I wish I could read a zine like this for a band I'm actually interested in rather than some lame dude ranting about openness on an acoustic guitar. Awful! (MJ)
3286 F St. / San Diego, CA 92102
longarms@jehovasfitness.org

PLASTIC BOMB #58 / 3.5 Euros
8.5 x 11 – printed – 80 pgs – German
As always, *das Bomb* is packed full of ads, reviews and interviews in tiny but well printed, relatively easy to read type, and focuses on the world of street punk and Oi. The covers always look crappy but the layouts inside have a good balance of punkness and legibility. It's from Germany, it's in German, most of the coverage is German bands, but there's plenty of international stuff in here too, like France's Brixton Cats, part two of a long piece on the history of Viennese punk, and a New Zealand scene report. *Alle ist klar?* (PC)
Postfach 100205 / D-47002 Duisburg / Germany
www.plastic-bomb.de

PUNK FLYERS / $3 ppd
8.5 x 11 – color copies! – 16 pgs
A cool collection of gathered and lent (?) flyers, though the cover is all you really need to see—a reproduction of the *Frenching The Bully* album cover. You know that haunting portrait of Mia? The Reaper is peering over her shoulder in this picture. There are show flyers stapled gently, full-page size, to one another. Predictable, although delicious, '80s punk stuff like Black Flag, The Germs and Bags, Muddy Frankenstein… Then the last few pages read like the *Thrasher Magazine* yellow pages, a short blog with all the band and people names in full caps, so you can quickly scan to see if yer interested or to check for possible mentions, or whatever. A keeper. (DS)
Rob Frischoff / 502 Minor Ave. #5 / Seattle, WA 98019

PUNK-ROCKER #5 / 2.5 Euros
7.75 x 11.5 – copied – 64 pgs – Spanish
Lo siento, but my Spanish is wholly insufficient to adequately review this zine. I am able to discern that there's about an even balance of coverage of newer bands and reformed oldsters. Usually, this is way too many reunions, but these folks have the good taste to cover Asta Kask, Berurier Noir, the Kids, and Guerrilla Urbana, among others. There's a report from the Wasted 2006 show, to give you an idea where their interests lay. Also interviewed are TNT, UK Subs, the Oppressed, Ultimo Asalto, Chingaleros, AON Records (from Bulgaria), and others. There are record, book, and show reviews, a bunch of sweet photos, and hardly any ads. If you're into the bands and read Spanish, I think you'd like this. (JM)
PRZ / Aptdo. De Correos 551 / 48080 Bilbao (Bizkaia) / Spain
punkrockerzine@hotmail.com

RAZORCAKE #39 / $4
8.5 x 11 – printed – 114 pgs
The Brown Issue. You know *Razorcake* by now, don't you? It's like if *MRR* was a different zine from a different place with different writers, and…never mind—it's good! This month has part two of the Circle One interview, which was the highlight of last issue as it is with this one. You may be like me and have never cared for Circle One's music, but that doesn't matter—this interview illuminates the early punk scene from the point of view of some fucked up violent youths who lived through it, grew up, and stayed punk. A highly recommended read. There are also interviews with pop punk purveyors The Copyrights and The Measure [SA], the always compelling I Object!, and this month's media whores The Penetrators, who actually give a damn good interview as well. The usual wild columnist, the usual thoughtful reviews, the usual integrity…Burmashave. (PC)
PO Box 42129 / LA, CA 90042
www.razorcake.org

RUN WITH SCISSORS #1 / $2 ppd or trade
8.5 x 5.5 – printed – 24 pgs
The debut issue of *Run With Scissors* consists mainly of handwritten notebook pages detailing the everyday exploits of its author, a young Canadian punk, along with some illustrations. The events herein consist of traveling, dumpster-diving, stealing from work, hanging out… Reading this type of zine as a teenager was inspiring, opening my suburban frame of mind to new possibilities, but nowadays it doesn't seem so adventurous. Only in the last piece when the author reflects on her life does it become interesting. (CS)
Starla! Blue / c/o Sharpie Fumes Collective / PO Box 31224 / Halifax, NS / B3K 5Y1 / Canada

THE STORY OF MY SCAB / $?
5.5 x 4.5 – copied – 42 pgs
Hand-numbered, limited-edition art zine that is like sneaking a peek at someone's sketchbook. The art is very beautiful losers-esque, and particularly reminiscent of Barry McGee's work. It was cool to look at, and came with cool stickers and buttons (I do love extras). But once I put it down, I doubt I'll pick it up again. (AA)
(no address)

SLASH AND BURN #4 / $?
8.5 x 11 – copied – 20 pgs
Punk zine written by a 30-year-old still thriving off of skateboarding, punk shows, and making pizza for a living. More proof that you can grow up without outgrowing what you love, if your love is true. This issue has interviews with Italian band Anti-You and *MRR*'s own Al Quint, who talks about hardcore today from the perspective of someone who experienced its past. Pages filled with killer flyers and all wrapped up with record reviews and some new release info. (CH)
punksbeforeprofits@hotmail.com

SMILE, HON. YOU'RE IN BALTIMORE! – CRIMINALLY YOURS #8.75 /$3
8.5 x 5.5 – copied- 56 pgs
This is the first time I've gotten the opportunity to check out this zine, and I think I've been missing out. This issue is a collection of first-hand accounts of crime in Baltimore, which apparently aren't too hard to collect. The stories range from funny to terrifying and all are written well and cohesively. Personally, I liked

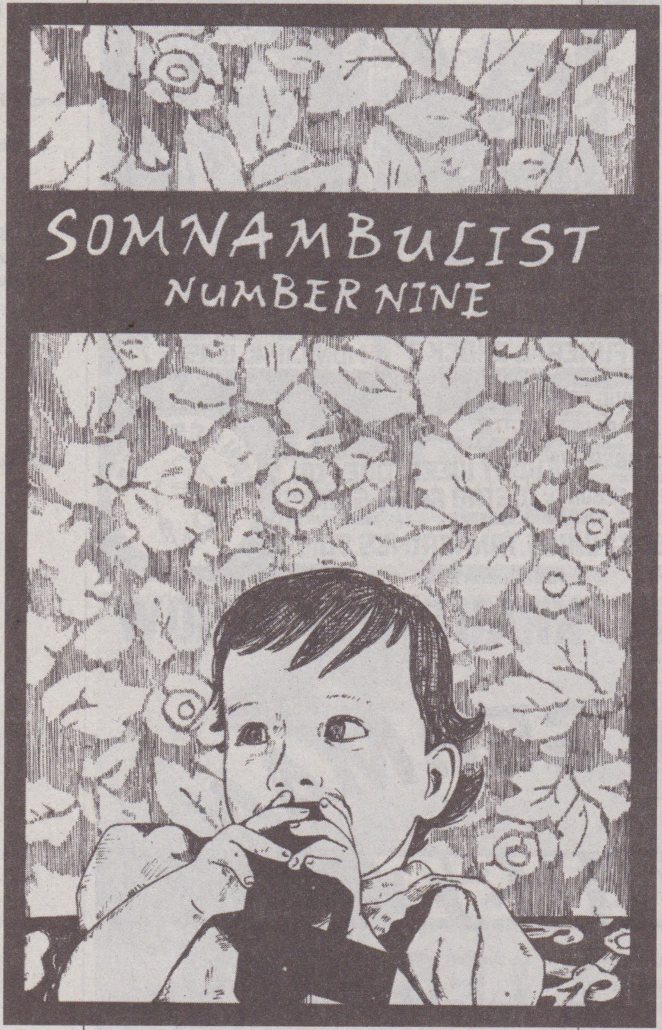
the story of the guy drunkenly driving a con-man around in hopes of getting a $40 video camera at 4:00 a.m. (CR)
PO Box 11064 / Baltimore, MD 21212
wpt@eightstonepress.com

SOMNAMBULIST #9 / $3
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 36 pgs
I was walking my bike with the flat tire, reading in the dark, stumbling through crosswalks because I was concentrating on the stories and feelin' it. Calling it pretty, a little wistful, not personal, the way some zines feel like diaries but of a nature of responsibility the writer has to keeping the public just informed enough to know what she thinks but not too much under the skin, just real day to day. It feels morbid in a way, that things just won't go right and there's nothing to be done. Like there is celebration in hopelessness. (JB)
PO Box 14871 / Portland, OR 97293

THRILLHOUSE #7 / FREE or stamps
8 x 11 – copied – 12 pgs
This zine from Australia covers mostly hardcore, and this issue focuses on band the Mindsnare, which the author says combines thrash, hardcore, and metal. This issue is pretty sparse at twelve pages, and has a section that is unreadable due to lightness in the photocopy. But the reviews are good because they chose to talk about records they actually like rather than reviewing just anything. This issue also has two short interviews with hardcore bands Crosscheck from Newcastle and the Pints from Brisbane, both of which sound cool. I would also like to say that the cover for this zine is awesome, and is currently on my bedroom wall in all its glory. It reminds me of a combination of the *Back from the Grave* comp illustrations and Weird Science comics—an excellent combination. (MJ)
14 Moray St. / East Bentleigh / VIC, 3165 / Australia
thrillhouse_zine@hotmail.com

TREES #3 / $?
6.25 x 4.25 – copied – 112 pgs
The daydreamy doodles and dreamy handwriting adorning the pages of *Trees* give you the feeling of reading a teenager's journal, which is essentially what this zine is. Samantha shares with you stories about her experiences in care-giving, animal care, traveling with her band, depression, and a whole lot more. Her idealistic sentiments are easy to relate to because they all stem from basic ideals of human compassion. Without so many words, I'd say this zine will either reaffirm your feelings or at least take you back to a feeling you once felt. (CH)
Samantha McCarthy / 30 Amherst Cres. / St. Albert AB / T8N 2P8 / Canada
thereisartinyou@hotmail.com

TV CASUALTY #1? / free?
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 12 pgs
I've been wondering what the fuck Karl Bakla was doing since his letters to *MRR* tapered off. I figured he'd be jogging or taking care of his kid or watching wrestling. Apparently he's keeping busy drawing bad-ass comics and trying to keep things positive by *not* watching the damn television. Not even just funny or appealing, but sweetly innocent in the appraisal of the awful state of things. This is a pure joy to behold. (JB)
Karl Bakla / 5650 E. Sahara Ave. # 2067 / Las Vegas, NV 89142



WHAT GIVES #1 / free w/postage?
A witty one-pager from the sassy shores of Australia. Pictures; Sick Pleasure and Chronic Seizure, reviews; NYHC goodies like Antidote and Urban Waste, gnarly interview; Smash N Grab... This zine is short as fuck but judge it not by its size, cause it will probably give you a paper cut, since it's only one page long. And who knows what kind of fucked up Australian bacteria is hanging out all over this nasty zine. Your finger will likely become overcome with gangrene or staph and your hand will fall off and then your arm, and then your other arm, and then you're probably not gonna forget about this zine for awhile, huh? Instead you will be grateful for any one page zine you will ever read again because now you won't have any hands for turning the pages, and you will feel bad for ever doubting the importance of one "lousy" page. Sucker. (CH)
Beau Stevenson-Newby / 5-100 Park Beach Roas / Coffs Harbour / NSW / Australia / 2450
xbeauvsthemx@hotmail.com

YOU DON'T GET THERE FROM HERE #3/ $2
5.5 x 4 –copied – 36 pgs
Just as every handwritten-in-block-capitals-travel zine must be compared to *Cometbus*, I suppose, every comic strip-as-daily-journal zine must be compared to *Snakepit*, but once the comparison is made, we should look at the zine independently and judge it on its own merits. With that in mind, I give enthusiastic praise for *You Don't Get There From Here*. This issue details Carrie's trip to Rome and Venice complete with great tiny little illustrations of the Pantheon, St. Peter's, the Grand Canal, and most importantly, Tazza D'Oro (which I will argue is much greater than Sant' Eustachio). This zine stands on its own as a really enjoyable read. (CR)
Carrie McNinch / PO Box 49403 / Los Angeles, CA 90049
cmcninch@gmail.com

Z-GUN #1 / $?
17 x 23 – printed – 40 pgs
For those of you who were sad to see Ryan Wells name disappear from the list of *Maximum* contributors, dry your tears and find out possibly why. He and group of others, including Scott Soriano and former *MRR* long-timer Jeff Heerman, and others, are working hard to bring the people this new printed peach. I was thrilled to receive this first issue for review! Brainy, comprehensive, and *entirely* readable—interviews that challenge rather than simply fluff...not to be missed: Pink Reason, Brainbombs and Black Humor, Not Not Fun Records Britt Brown, plus a ton of fun-to-read reviews. *Z-Gun* is a newsprint art-punk primer for those interested but under-exposed. But if it's what you're into, you'll be rewarded even greater by getting your mitts on one of these papers, fresh text. Next issue please!!! (DS)
1114 21st Street / Sacramento, CA 95811
www.zgun.org

924 GILMAN

SEPTEMBER

Friday 14 $7 (DOORS OPEN @ 7:30)
Dr. Know (Oxnard) • Circle One (L.A.)
Zero Bullshit • 'Taint • The Schizos

Saturday 15 $7
Ghoul • Funerot (OR) • Oskorei • Embrionic Devourment

Friday 21 $6 (Benefit for Philly Showspace)
Thou • Acts Of Sedition
Mohoram Atta • Dukes Up • Warbird

Saturday 22 $7 (DOORS OPEN @ 7:30)
Insect Warfare (TX) • Unholy Grave (Japan)
Population Reduction • Strains of the Apocalypse
Maggot Colony • Ignit

Friday 28 $7
Paint It Black (PA) • Blacklisted (MA)
Allegiance • Trash Talk • Punch

Saturday 29 $7
Babyland • C/A/T • Floating Corpses • Swann Danger

Sunday 30 $5 (5PM SHOW)
Crucial Cause • Rat Salad (TX)
La Grita • Corprophagy • Say Bok Gwai

OCTOBER

Friday 05
Modern Life Is War (IA) • T.B.A.

Saturday 06
Tried & True • Troublemaker
Call To Arms • Skull Stomp

Friday 12
T.B.A.

Saturday 13
Skitzo • Fog Of War • Scarecrow
Witchaven (L.A.) • Zombie Holocaust

Friday 19
Black Fag (L.A.) • Warkrime
Sabertooth Zombie • Lost Boys

Saturday 20 $7
Hellshock (OR) • Age (Japan) • Devils Son In Law
Sahn Maru (Record Release) • Worldeater

Sunday 28
5PM SHOW
HALLOWEEN SHOW COVERS NIGHT

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ALL SHOWS START AT 8PM (UNLESS NOTED)
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ATTENTION CLASSIFIEDS READERS: WHEN RESPONDING TO THESE ADS REMEMBER THAT THE WORLD OF MRR READERS IS NOT A PUNK ROCK UTOPIA WHERE EVERYONE IS LOOKING OUT FOR EVERYONE ELSE AND WE'RE ALL COOL... BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU TELL PEOPLE AND BE CAREFUL WHO YOU SEND MONEY TO. THERE ARE PEOPLE OUT THERE IN PUNKLAND WHO WILL TRY TO RIP YOU OFF EXPLOIT YOU OR MANIPULATE YOU. REALLY ITS TRUE.

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WANTED: THE TERRORISTS *CRAZY LIFE* 7" I have Poison Idea *Pick Your King* 7" clear vinyl; Sin 34 7"; Eyes *TAQN* 7"; Black Flag *Licorice Pizza* 7"; Users *Kicks in Style* 7"; Meaty Buys 7"; Nasty Facts 7"; Zero Boys *Vicious Circle* LP on Nimrod; Lewd *American Wino* LP, + more. Mark Velo, 3306 Mesa Dr, Bakersfield, CA 93306; punxonly@gmail.com.

PLOPPY PANTS #6 OUT NOW Interviews with SSS, Malignant Tumour, I Object, Confuse feature, reviews, pants shiting stories and loads more. send $2/Trade to Pillars, Strathmiglo Road, Falkland, Fife, Scotland, KY15 7AD Always looking for zines/demos to review!

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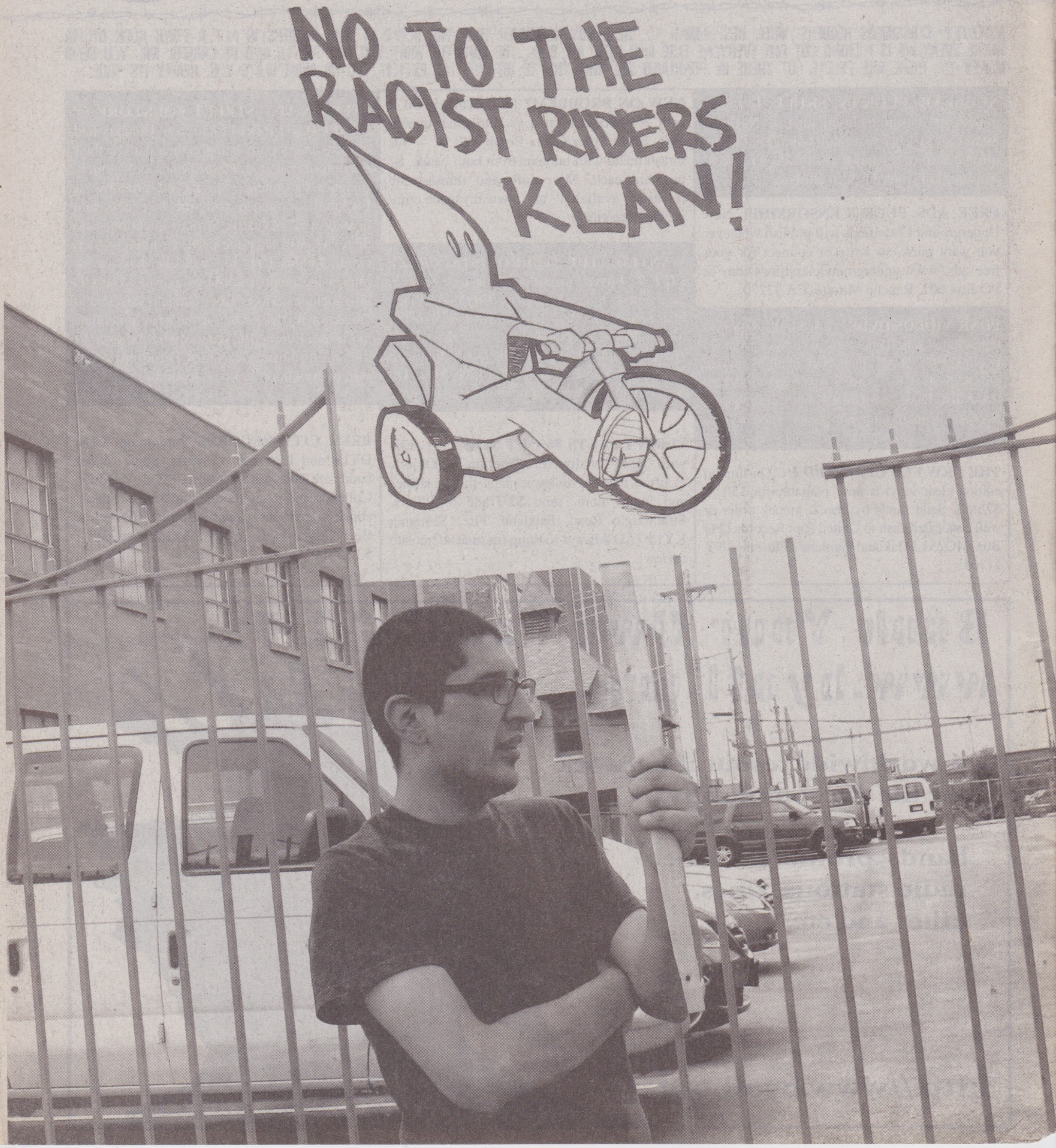
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